AGRARIAN CHANGE IN THE CANAL COLONIES, PUNJAB, 1890 - 1935

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled "Agrarian Change in the Canal Colonies, Punjab, 1890-1935", submitted by Indu Agnihotri for the Ph.D. degree of this university is an original research work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The submission of this thesis has involved taking assistance from many people. To see this as a debt would reduce a live social relationship with them to a narrow, formal one. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, who supervised this thesis, opened up new spheres of research and enquiry at every point by his critical comments and queries. His patience, of course, more than matched procrastination on my part. With Neeladri Bhattacharya I have shared many ideas and concerns from the inception of this study. His fondness for meticulous detail has often helped me as also the hot air generated while discussing issues which tended to transcend purely academic concerns. Amitabh Pande and Amar Bhai in Chandigarh and the Behgals in Patiala made my stay in both these places more meaningful and interesting than it would have otherwise been. Kuldeep and my family helped me to continue research in many ways, but most of all by their sarcasm-tinged encouragement. Many of the ideas that have gone into this thesis sprang from my experience at the J.N.U. Its politics and culture helped me to approach academics with renewed enthusiasm. To all those at J.N.S. who put up with my periodic absences, to Jayoti, Jeevan and others who helped me in proof-reading and those seemingly trivial details without which no thesis can be completed, I can only convey the warmest greetings with the hope that our common enquiries and endeavours

shall continue. I take the opportunity to thank the Indian Council for Historical Research for financial assistance and Vivekanand Mahila College for granting me leave to pursue research. Shanker, Ravi, Vergheese and Gabar Singh saw this through the various stages of typing while Anil Singh pitched in by preparing the maps at extremely short notice. The fact that the thesis still leaves so much unsaid is entirely my responsibility.

Indu Agnihotri

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ABBREVIATIONS

AR	- Assessment Report.
ASBI	- Agricultural Statistics of British India.
BECR	- Banking Enquiry Committee Report.
BEIP	- Board of Economic Inquiry in the Punjab, Publications of.
CEHI	- Cambridge Economic History of India.
Comm. & Ind.	- Commerce and Industries Department, GOI.
Comm. & Trade	- Commerce and Trade Branch of Commerce and Industries Department.
DG	- District Gazetteer.
FC	- Financial Commissioner.
Home Pol.	- Home Department, Political.
ICC	- Indian Cotton Committee.
IFC	- Indian Famine Commission.
IIC	- Indian Irrigation Commission.
LRARP	- Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab.
PAR	- Punjab Administration Report.
PPBECR	- The Punjab Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee.
PSM	- Punjab Settlement Manual.
PVS	- Punjab Village Survey.
RCA	- Royal Commission on Agriculture in India.
RCPE	- Report on the Canal Projects Estimate.
Rev. Agri. Agri.	- Revenue Agriculture Department, Agriculture Branch.
Rev. Agri. Rev.	- Revenue Agriculture Department, Revenue Branch.

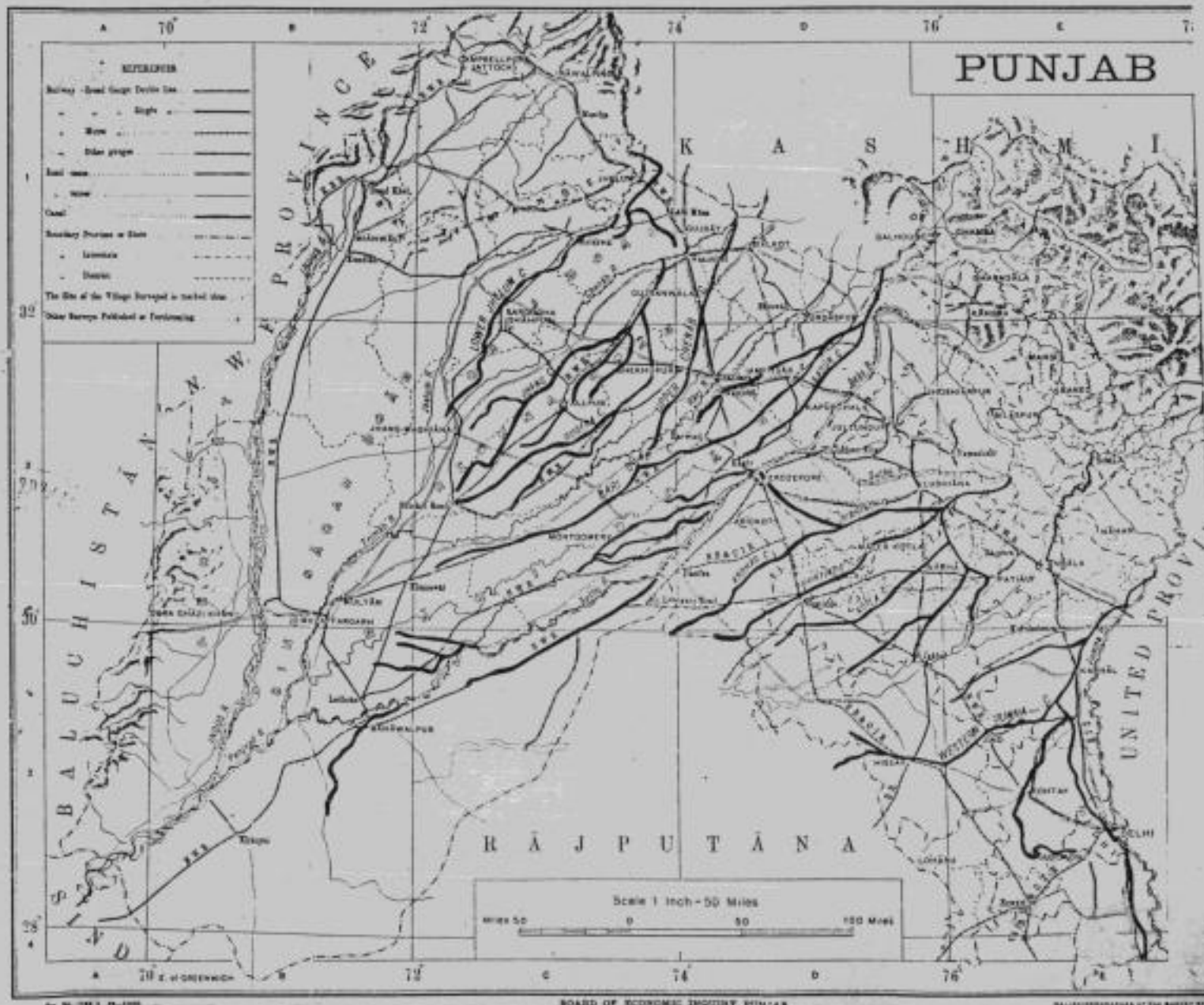
Rev. Agri. Fam.	- Revenue Agriculture Department, Famine Branch.
Rev. Agri. Gen.	- Revenue Agriculture Department, General Branch.
RITPRR	- Report on the Internal Trade of Punjab by Rail and River.
SR	- Settlement Report.
WR	- Weekly Report.
DRA	- Department of Revenue and Agriculture.
GOI	- Government of India.
LCC	- Lower Chenab Colony.
LJC	- Lower Jhelum Colony.
PCCSR	- Punjab Co-operative Credit Societies Report.
PCR	- Punjab Colonies Report.
PCSR	- Punjab Co-operative Societies Report.
UBDC	- Upper Bari Doab Colony.

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PUNJAB
K A S H M I
R Ā J P U T Ā N A
U N I T E D P R O V
B A L U C H I S T A N
N W F P R O V I N C E
Scale 1 inch = 50 Miles
Miles 50 0 50 100 Miles
BOARD OF ECONOMIC INQUIRY, PUNJAB

INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken as part of a general wave of renewed interest in 'peasant studies' which gripped a host of us, at the J.N.U. Our concerns to begin with were somewhat different - the debate on 'modes of production' having only just shaken up social scientists in India. Theoretical nuances apart, the contribution of those who had built up what is commonly known as the 'Eastern India' model in agrarian studies in India was equally stimulating. These formed the immediate backdrop to our initial forays into research. Over the years, however, the concerns and issues involving peasant studies have both shifted course as well as outgrown the initial stage. This study, consequently, hangs midway down the stream; looking for its moorings in the initial premises of the old debate, and finding itself pulled in the direction of new concerns.

Research into the agrarian history of Punjab still offers many possibilities. For, try as one might, there was no way of incorporating Punjab into the scope of the Eastern India model. Since the case of Punjab had always been treated as 'different', there was no need to prove the point, one could straightaway get down to the question of how it was different, and why? The problem arose at another level. Punjab, especially the Canal Colonies, which form the focus of this study, stood out as an example of colonial development enterprise.

The deeper one went into the achievements of the grandiose irrigation scheme, the more the need was felt to assess this in the context of colonial agriculture. Was it possible for the colonial state to overcome the constraints that its very existence imposed on Indian Agriculture? From the start it was clear that to even set out in search of Hori, the anti-hero of Indian agriculture, was a vain exercise as far as Punjab was concerned. There was no alternative but to accept that Hori, though representative of a vast mass of the exploited Indian peasant, was not representative of the entire range of the oppressed peasantry in colonial times. Given the nature of uneven development under colonialism, Punjab was 'different', though not altogether so.

As compared to other regions, the social history of Punjab still remains under-researched. This makes things at once easy and more difficult. For a vast majority of those undertaking research on Punjab, it is only now that agrarian change in Punjab prior to the Green Revolution has acquired any significance. History writing in Punjab had for long confined itself to a study of the various Gurus and their times or the Sikh chieftains; extending at best to Punjab politics in the anti-imperialist phase. Indu Banga's study was therefore a welcome change.[1] Even so, published work on the social and economic history of Punjab remains limited. Banerji's book, fills the gap only to a limited extent.[2] Banerji having

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1 Banga, 1978.

2 H. Banerji, 1982.

delved deep into source material on the agrarian structure of Punjab in the second half of the nineteenth century, provides an overwhelming volume of information but leaves some questions unanswered. Mishra's study and recent articles published by him, are firstly a comparative study of patterns of long-term agrarian change in Bombay and Punjab;[3] secondly the problems he addresses himself to are more closely related to growth-economics than social history even though the study covers a vast span from 1881-1972. It refers to the Canal Colonies also in this context. Bhattacharya's study, also unpublished, covers a whole range of issues related to the society and economy of the Punjab while specifically concentrating on questions relating to production and exchange.[4] Bhattacharya, while referring to the Canal Colonies, concerns himself primarily with Central and Eastern Punjab.

Available studies on the Canal Colonies are either of the pre-1947 period, or more recent ones, all unpublished. While Paustian's is a somewhat contemporary account of irrigation in the Canal Colonies, its financial implications and costs incurred by cultivators on account of the same, Madan confines himself by and large to the ecological issues involved in and emanating from extension of canal irrigation in Western Punjab.[5] A study of behavioural patterns, as well as the goals, role and models that arose out of canal irrigation -

along the structuralist-functionalist method-again does not deal with problems of agrarian history.[6] Unpublished papers available indicate that research on the Canal Colonies has by and large concentrated on issues of policy and political structure or protest.[7] Ali specifically sets out to study the impact of agricultural colonisation on the economy and society of the Punjab, but again, refrains from delving into aspects of both economic policy and development, confining itself more to issues related to allotment policy and its social-political consequences.

This study examines developments in the Colony tracts of Western Punjab in the context of extension of canal irrigation to this region. Colonisation covered about six districts of Western Punjab, but also extended to parts of two other districts which strictly speaking lay in Central Punjab. The Colony districts were by and large part of the arid, rainless tracts of Western Punjab, where cultivation was extremely insecure. Water and irrigation were both of great importance in the regional economy for whatever cultivation was carried out, was dependent on inundation, inundation canals built by the pre-British rulers and, wells. The lands, sparsely populated, were inhabited by numerous tribes and other communities leading a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence along with some settled agriculturists. The vast tracts pro-

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6 A.J. Siddiqi, 1968, unpub., microfilm, NMML.

7 Imran Ali, 1982, unpub. and B.J. Poff, unpub.

vided ample grazing grounds and the inhabitants enjoyed customary rights over these. Into this leisurely life revolving around a small natural stream, a stray well or a seasonal water-channel, with rainfall offering more hope than actual relief, suddenly waved the magic wand of Pax Britannica. This changed the face of the region for all times to come. What was the impact of Colonisation on the old settlers? Who benefitted from allotments on the canals? Where did the settlers come from? Was there a pattern in the flow of migrants and what impact did Colonisation and migration have on demographic trends? These are some of the questions we address ourselves to, while also examining the claims of the success of Colonisation. For, soon after Colonisation several problems pointing to the negative aspects came up. These related to the disruption of the natural drainage system, resulting in waterlogging and efflorescence. This and Colonisation generally adversely affected the old cultivators and their lands (Chapter I).

We also discuss the emergence of the Canal Colony scheme, the evolution of policy in terms of irrigation financing. Earlier proposals for construction of canals in this region were all turned down. What then prompted government to flag off the biggest Colonisation scheme in later years? What were the considerations weighing in favour of heavy investments in canals? Were these considerations financial or was the objective different - development of agriculture and model agricultural communities? We turn to allotment policy for possible

answers. What was the basis of allotment and was this uniformly adhered to? Did all the Colonies follow a basic pattern or did factors determining allotment change over time? We discuss the categories of grants, the various contingent factors that came up - the needs of the army, the special grants, on conditional terms, the patronage grants to ensure political support in the region. The outcome of allotment policy was reflected in the predominance of certain categories of grantees as well as certain castes. What implications did this have for the future and the landownership pattern that emerged as a result of this policy? The vast tracts appropriated and, subsequently allotted to 'grantees', were originally the home of tribes and settlers who also enjoyed certain rights over these lands. What happened to the rights of these people in the changed circumstances and what was the process by which their lands, cultivated or grazing, were appropriated by government? (Chapter II).

Once the initial allotments were over, and the lands cleared up, the process of administrative consolidation of these lands began. This manifested itself in the form of settlement policy and water distribution and management. What was the extent and nature of revenue demand imposed on the cultivators? Was this a fixed demand, or was there an attempt made to scale-up the demand at regular intervals? What was the mechanism employed to raise revenue demand and how did reassessment affect the peasant? Did the non-canal irrigated

lands get any relief since the primary justification for raising demand was the security provided by irrigation supply? We examine the standard of assessment and how it was used to justify an increasing revenue demand. Did the benefits of canal-water reach all? What role did the canal bureaucracy play in the supply of water or lack of it? All through this period, cultivators clamoured for remission of revenue and water-rate demand pointing to the rigidity of demand, as well as its quantum in the context of crop failure consequent upon failure of irrigation supply. We examine the policy with regard to remissions in general and specifically in the context of the depression (Chapter III).

As discussed earlier, agrarian developments in Eastern India have provided a sort of model to study agrarian changes in colonial India. These have specifically contributed to the understanding of the nexus between the merchant-money lender and the landlord who together exploited the vast mass of peasants. Recent studies in agrarian change in other parts of India have further elaborated on these, or examined developments in different regions in the context of the basic postulates of this model.[8]

In the Canal Colonies the extension of canal irrigation and cultivation set off a whole range of economic processes. Firstly, the total output and value of agricultural produce

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8 Cf. S. Amin, 1984, C. Baker, 1986, N. Charlesworth, 1986, S. Guha, 1984, K.N. Raj, et.al., 1985 to name a few.

went up remarkably. Within this, cultivation of wheat and cotton marked an unprecedented increase. Both crops were grown primarily for the market and the period up to the Mid-1920s saw a rapid expansion of the commercial network and growth of markets and expansion of communications. Exports from Karachi went up, establishing its primacy over other ports, with reference to wheat exports. The years marked the unprecedented price boom as well as slump. What was the impact of these in a region which had only recently and yet very rapidly been integrated into the world market? Who gained from the 'boom' prices and could the peasant withstand the depression? What was the impact on different strata within the peasantry of all these changes? Where did the government stand vis-a-vis all these developments? What was the nature of the 'market' that developed; and could all sections of the peasantry reap economic benefits from the changing situation or did it only enhance the vulnerability of the small holder/tenant by exposing him to the market forces? (Chapter IV).

Along with commercial developments, we look at the social reflection of changes subsequent upon Colonisation. What was the pattern of tenancy that emerged? Did Colonisation help promote the ideal of self-cultivation? What was the form of rent appropriated by landlords, and the rate at which rent was taken? Colonisation held forth the promise of prosperity and profit - but did the vast mass of tenants

find themselves in a position to resist the attempts of the landlords to raise the component of rent in total demand on the peasant? Were all tenants equally oppressed? (Chapter V).

The economic standing of the peasantry is reflected in his ability to withstand economic pressures and being able to hold out against the combined or single-handed onslaught on his rights and status by the landlord and the moneylender. The debt question has been central to most studies in Indian agrarian history. We examine the nature of the debt problem in the Canal Colonies - its extent and impact. Was debt a sign of prosperity as argued by officialdom in Punjab? Or else, was it a reflection on the indolence and incompetence of the peasant? We discuss the debt question in terms of the nature of transaction, the various avenues open to the peasant to acquire loans, the role of governmental agencies, as well as the position vis-a-vis agriculturist and non-agriculturist moneylenders. How serious was the Punjab government about its anti-professional moneylender stance? Were the legislative provisions sufficient to prevent alienation and transfer of land from agriculturists to non-agriculturists? What about transfer of land from poor agriculturists to prosperous agriculturists who succeeded in acquiring land on cheap rates for cultivation at a time when cultivation was still profitable? Did the depression have any different impact on these trends? (Chapter VI).

These are some of the aspects covered by the study and

the questions we address ourselves to. Through this exercise we try to arrive at an assessment of the impact of Colonisation on the different rural classes; the impact in terms of evolution of society in this region, and the roots of social conflict contained within this pattern of development.

As is obvious, the study leaves some questions unanswered. In fact it raises many more. These will have to wait for further research and, more persistent researchers, perhaps.

Chapter I

THE ECOLOGICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC SPECIFICITIES OF THE REGION

The first of the Canal colonies, the Lower Chenab Colony, was officially launched in 1892. This heralded the beginning of a new era of state control and intervention in agriculture in British India. The Colonisation programme, greatly extended in the course of the next two decades and later upheld as the 'greatest irrigation works in the world', covered approximately sixteen tahsils falling in eight districts of British Punjab (see Appendix I). These fell in the Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan divisions of the Province and comprised more than one-sixth of its total cultivated area. Forming the last of Darling's six circle divisions or zones in Punjab, the Canal Colonies comprised of lands lying across the Jhelum, Chenab and the Ravi-Beas, popularly known as the Jech, Rechna and the Bari doābs.[1]

The decades following the establishment of the Canal Colonies saw wide-ranging change in the region. This change was reflected in its population, in trends

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1. The first five zones were (a) the sub-montane districts, (b) the Central Punjab from Jhelum in the north to the riverain districts of the Sutlej in the south, (c) three districts north of the Jhelum, (d) the arid tracts of Hissar and the region around Delhi and (e) Multan and three districts in the valley of the Indus. cf. Darling, M.L., 1925. All references here are to the 1977 edition., pp. 23-24.

in demographic shifts, in the nature and state of the economy, in the tenures and rights of agriculturists, the trade and commerce of the region and above all in the day-to-day life and relations of the people/ communities involved. These are some of the aspects we examine in the course of this study. In this first chapter, we take a brief look at the physical and human geography of the region: we study the state of the economy in relation to its physical features, the role irrigation played in the pre-Colonisation phase, and agricultural practice in that context. We next examine the demographic changes that came about as a result of Colonisation. Where did the immigrants come from? Was this a continuation of earlier trends in demography? Was it a mass immigration or did specific caste or occupational groups influence the composition of the migrants? Finally, what was the impact of Colonisation in these regions in view of these factors?

Section I - Soil and Climatic Features of the Canal Colony Districts

Since the decision to extend canal irrigation in Punjab was based on its rainfall patterns and soil types, it is necessary to outline some of these basic features. Contemporary commentaries generally clubbed together most of the Colony districts for purposes of physical typology and, no doubt, there was a certain uniformity or commonality in the physical geography of the region.

The region essentially comprised of a vast alluvial plain, with the monotony being broken only by the Salt Range plateau and the arid broken hills near Sānglā and Kirānā on either side of the Chenab. The plains region lay at about 600 to 1,200 feet above sea level, with a land slope of about a foot per mile on an average. Apart from the hill terrain, the typological differentiation was provided by existing or abandoned river-courses. Thus there were the Khādir lands or the broad flood plains marking the deposits of newer alluvium; these were bounded by the dhāya or somewhat raised steep bluffs, intricately gullied and often twenty feet high or more; the immediate riverain was the bet land, exposed to inundation and, therefore, agriculturally valuable in the early period. Away from the rivers were the higher and more arid parts of the doābs, usually bearing features of waste land unless irrigated - known popularly as the Bār. While, generally speaking, the doābs in Punjab formed a kind of a central core, if one saw these as divided in the Eastern and Western parts, as happened due to partition, the Western region stood out as more arid and less easily irrigated due to local physical conditions.[2]

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2. c.f., district gazetteers of the respective districts. Also for a general description, Spate, O.H.K., India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography, 1954, Methuen, 1967 ed. p.461, ff.

For purposes of classification, in fact, despite the richness of soil, the entire western region, barring the riverain tracts, formed an arid or semi-arid zone. This was primarily due to scanty rainfall, as distinct from barren soil conditions. This point was made in almost all the early settlement reports and substantiated by Milne, Director of Agriculture, in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture. Milne emphasised the fact that the land in Western Punjab was "by no means unculturable," and that the soil was a "deep alluvial sandy loam, deficient in humus, but well supplied with the essential mineral constituents, such as lime phosphates and potash". This combined with the great variation in the day and night temperatures in the region, expanding and contracting the soil particles, tended "to weather them and enable them to recover their fertility after a fallow, especially when the land is well cultivated."[3] The result was that crop after crop could be obtained without manuring. Earlier the Shahpur Gazetteer had observed that, "if we except the Thal of the Sind Sagar doāb, there is little land that would not repay the labour of the husbandman, could he but procure water at a moderate cost."[4]

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3. R.C.A., 1927, Evidence, Punjab, p. 171.

4. [illegible] Shahpur, 1883-84, p. 1

While the district gazetteers generally maintain that the soil was a fertile loam, they do not deny that there were variations within this, often corresponding to the physical features. Thus in Jhang district, while to the extreme west the high sand dunes of the thal made cultivation well nigh impossible and the central tract between the Jhelum and the Chenab had large patches impregnated with Kallar. Close to the Chenab "the soil was sandy, sometimes a stiffish grey, containing a good deal of brackish material. Even when it is not affected by Kallar, it is a light loam, yielding very indifferent crops."[5]

The Chenab Colony Gazetteer classified the various soils as follows, but admitted that variations could occur within this as well. Thus there was the Rohi, which consisted of good loam without admixture of sand or Kallar and was generally found in depressions. Maira, one of the most common in this region generally contained a nominal admixture of sand but no trace of Kallar. While Maira was generally treated as a good culturable soil, the presence of excess sand led to a fall in the value of maira lands also in parts. Kallarathi was land impregnated with kallar but culturable, nevertheless. Retli - or sandy - as the name signified, generally

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5. D.G. Jhang, 1929, p.6.

contained an excess of sand but was free of kallar; Rarri was uncultivated but culturable land, bare of vegetation because of which water readily flowed off; Rappar was land with a few inches of good soil bottomed by pure river sand, but could be unculturable also if the sub-soil sand was too near the surface. Shor, Rarri and Tibba were generally classified as unculturable owing to the presence of kankar, while the third was all sand heaps or cut up by ravines.[6] The last three soils were, however, supplemented, for assessment purposes, by three more general categories of unculturable land - the banjar jadīd, banjar kādim and ghair mumkin. Of these the first category was used for land which, though cultivated previously, had not been sown for four successive harvests and thereby entered as a new fallow. This entry was to be maintained for another four harvests, after which the land passed into kādim or old fallow. But kādim, included all culturable waste, whether or not it had ever been ploughed. The last category was reserved for barren land.[7] It may be mentioned here that although much land in the Colony districts comprised of previously uncultivated but culturable waste, the last category, ghair mumkin,

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6. C.C.G., 1904, p.63. The Gazetteer mentioned that the sand of the desert was perhaps derived from the shore, in the context of the likelihood of the Rann of kutch and lower portions of the Indus Valley having been occupied by the sea in post-tertiary times.

7. P.S.M., Doule, 1930, p.141.

Table 1.1

Area by Soil in Acres

Soil	Gugera I	Gugera II	Rakh Branch	Jhang Branch III
Rohi	7,160	4,735	-	842
Maira	343,677	341,785	375,368	78,218
Kallarathi	7,267	12,817	40,005	2,905
Tibbi	18	1,444	237	-
Retli	1,558	7,132	15,537	3,243
Rappar	293	22	388	336
Missi	218	-	81	-
Rarri	70	406	191	-
Shor	-	188	44	-
Ghair Mumkin	278	14,063	3,512	61
Total Area Allotted	360,539	382,592	457,024	85,605

Sources: A.R.Gugera Branch II, L.C.C., 1912.
A.R. Rakh Branch, L.C.C., 1913.
A.R. Jhang Branch III, L.C.C., 1911.

though not altogether absent, occupied a very small proportion of Colony lands.

The above description applied by and large to all the land covered by the Lower Chenab Canal, falling in Jhang and later Lyallpur districts. Most of the land in the other districts too broadly fell in the same soil groups, though in Gujranwala the additional soil types of gasrāh and missi were to be found. It was observed that a large part of land in this district, recorded as "kallar ghair mumkin" was actually fit for cultivation, provided irrigation facilities were available.[8] In Montgomery similarly, the central plateau, almost entirely uncultivated, consisted of soil that was inferior and saline, but could bear fair crops with a plentiful supply of water. The soil between the ridge and the river in Montgomery, "comprised of both, very good loams and also some very hard soils quite unfit for cultivation."[9] In Multan, the soil was "of an alluvial character with sand lying a short distance below the surface."[10] In Lahore, while the mānjha area comprised of a uniformly level surface and soil was inclined to be dry, in the Hithar lowlands, the soil was a soft

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8. D.G.Gujranwala, 1935, p.2.
9. D.G.Montgomery, 1934, p.5.
10. D.G. Multan, 1901-02, p.9.

alluvial loam, yielding readily to tillage and at times too sandy to be genuinely fertile.[11]

However, despite the fact that much of the soil in this region consisted of a rich alluvium, which had retained its productive powers by virtue of it being hitherto uncultivated, in the reports of the time, soil classification though made a note of, was by and large, not given undue importance, with most reports at best referring to differences in terms of clay, loam and sand when talking of the soils. This was primarily due to the fact that official opinion, represented at the end of the nineteenth century by none less than Colonel Wace, the Financial Commissioner himself, was veering round to the view that in this region as well as a great part of the rest of the Province, "rainfall is so scanty and capricious that water is everything and soil nothing."[12] While the Financial Commissioner did not quite imply that the demarcation of soils was useless, what was being impressed upon was the futility of recording distinctions of which no practical use was made and elaborations which only added to the patwaris' difficulties in maintaining annual records.[13] Settlement Officers were at this time

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11. D.G. Lahore

12. P.S.M., op.cit., p.138.

13. Ibid.

categorically asked in certain districts, including all the Canal Colony districts, to confine themselves to a record of classes of land based on the presence or absence of the several kinds of artificial irrigation or river flooding.

Thus, even as late the 1930s, the assessment report, Samundri tahsil noted the following classification:-

1. Nahri: land irrigated by canal flow
2. Nahri - Jhallari: land irrigated by canal by lift.
3. Chahi - Nahri: land irrigated by both wells and canal.
4. Chahi: land irrigated from a well.
5. Chahi - Sailab: land irrigated partly from a well and partly from a river or stream.
6. Sailab: land receiving moisture from inundation from a river or a stream.
7. Abi: land irrigated from a tank, river or stream by lift or cut.
8. Barani: land dependent entirely or rainfall.

The assessment report also mentioned other classifications, noted above, for unculturable land. With regard to soils, it added that when the first record-of-rights was prepared an elaborate soil survey based on natural classification was conducted but this

was found to be of little value for assessment purposes.[14] Similar explanations are to be found in the other assessment reports for Lyallpur districts.

This is not to say that soil differentiation did not matter at all. Classification came to be based on soil and other natural conditions. Land in classes I to III was considered good; class IV was below average. While classes V and VI were the hallmark of inferiority in Lyallpur tahsils, in other districts the worst class of land was represented by classes VII and VIII. Soil variation within districts was thus brought out by the fact of a greater portion of land being classified in the different categories: Jaranwala tahsil in Lyallpur for instance had 83 per cent of the land falling in the first three categories, the corresponding figure for Samundri being 73 per cent. Also, it was widely known that Jangli chaks generally did not fall in Class I.[15]

Prevailing notions about superiority of soil could, however, prove to be erroneous as well. Thus in the early period of Colonisation, it was believed that land in the Jhelum Colony was superior to that of the Chenab Colony since Jhelum water was known to be richer

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14. A.R. Samundri, 1936, p.2.

15. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.33.

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in silt. This belief was also reflected in more people seeking grants on the Jhelum, as well as higher prices at auctions; it was also on this basis that nazrānā rates were fixed much above those on the Chenab. But these hopes were belied, as the Extra Assistant Colonisation Officer admitted before the Canal Colonies' Committee, while also recommending a reduction in nazrānā rates considering "instances are not wanting of some grantees having resigned their grants on account of their inability to pay it."[16]

The importance of water was directly linked to the scarcity of rain in western Punjab. Here it may be pointed out that The Indian Irrigation Commission, specifically assigned the task of investigating and reporting on irrigation as a protection against famine, observed that Western Punjab, with an average annual rainfall of 10 inches, the lowest average for Punjab, was particularly prone to drought. The number of dry years or years of severe drought that may be expected in fifty years being fourteen, the highest for Punjab:

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16. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers File, p.51.

Tract	Average annual rainfall (in inches)	No. of dry years or years of severe drought that may be expected in fifty years	
		Dry years including years of severe drought	years of severe drought
1. Punjab, sub-montane	33	10	4
2. Punjab, South East	23	13	5
3. Punjab, Central	23	13	6
4. Punjab, West	10	14	9

Source: Indian Irrigation Commission, 1901-03, Vol. 1, p. 1.

Although Western Punjab did not directly correspond to the Canal Colonies, these did form a major portion of it. Apart from the statement given above, an added risk came from the high level of variability of rainfall, from year to year, on the one hand, and a high intensity of rainfall at any one time. Both adversely affected agricultural operations. When the Irrigation Commission proceeded to classify the districts of Punjab on the basis of Secure, Rainless and Insecure, 4 of the Colony districts, Multan, Montgomery, Shahpur and Jhang found a place in the second category while Gujranwala and Lahore fell in the last.[17] (Lyallpur and Sheikhupura districts had not yet been formed).

17. I.I.C., Pt. II, p. 2.

The absence, or inadequacy of rainfall was a feature that all contemporary reports drew attention to, along with discussing its implications for the agriculture of the region. In the Chenab Colony,

> "rain was always scanty and in the southern portion of the Bār probably averaged less than 5 inches, while in bad seasons its deficiency was almost total."[18]

This was the state in lands irrigated by the Lower Chenab Canal though the average for Jhang district was about 12 inches.[19] In Lyallpur district while the Jaranwala and Lyallpur tahsils could expect 12 inches of rainfall normally, the other tahsils got less, the tendency being for rainfall to decrease as one moved away from the hills.[20]

In Lyallpur, Barani cultivation was confined usually to the poorest land and mostly fodder crops were grown, while Sailāb was uncertain since flooding, in later years, was not as good as earlier.[21]

In Multan, except in the north of Mianwali, "dry cultivation is out of the question;" yet it was observed

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18. C.C.G., op.cit., p.5
19. S.R.Jhang, 1880, p.16.
20. A.R.Samundri, op.cit., p.9.
21. Ibid.

Table 1.2(a)

Rainfall - Lyallpur, 1907-08 to 1926-27
(in inches) recorded at Khanuana

1907-08	10.00	1917-18	13.92
1908-09	22.20	1918-19	2.54
1909-10	17.70	1919-20	12.68
1910-11	18.50	1920-21	3.56
1911-12	4.60	1921-22	7.82
1912-13	8.50	1922-23	9.40
1913-14	12.90	1923-24	18.85
1914-15	16.80	1924-25	10.10
1915-16	0.40	1925-26	9.95
1916-17	12.22	1926-27	9.65

Source: BETP, PVS 4, p.46.

Table 1.2(b)

Rainfall, Gujranwala, 1915 to 1925
(in inches)

1915	20.45
1916	19.22
1917	38.99
1918	17.54
1919	30.43
1920	16.18
1921	17.30
1922	24.86
1923	33.02
1924	21.41
1925	16.20

Source: BETP, PVS 6, p.46.

Table 1.2(c)

Rainfall - Multan, 1920-21 to 1935-36 (in inches)

1920-21	4.73	1928-29	3.28
1921-22	9.05	1929-30	11.48
1922-23	3.57	1930-31	5.60
1923-24	6.12	1931-32	5.53
1924-25	9.81	1932-33	5.52
1925-26	4.46	1933-34	7.19
1926-27	6.06	1934-35	8.18
1927-28	4.95	1935-36	4.40

Source: BEIP, PVS 11, p.66.

Table 1.2(d)

Rainfall - 1873-74 to 1892-93 at Gugera, Montgomery (in inches)

1873-74	7.9	1883-84	7.9
1874-75	8.4	1884-85	7.4
1875-76	9.8	1885-86	8.3
1876-77	8.4	1886-87	6.9
1877-78	11.6	1887-88	8.1
1878-79	12.1	1888-89	8.6
1879-80	8.8	1889-90	11.06
1880-81	6.4	1890-91	19.00
1881-82	19.7	1891-92	5.12
1882-83	12.4	1892-93	11.79

Source: A.R., Gugera, 1894.

Table 1.2(e)

Rainfall - Lahore 1915-16 to 1934-35
(in inches)

1915-16	6.06	1925-26	21.59
1916-17	29.33	1926-27	16.98
1917-18	30.65	1927-28	13.87
1918-19	12.01	1928-29	17.20
1919-20	21.53	1929-30	35.88
1920-21	6.51	1930-31	26.67
1921-22	18.62	1931-32	35.50
1922-23	18.73	1932-33	13.50
1923-24	21.09	1933-34	22.62
1924-25	15.13	1934-35	24.49

Source: A.R.Lahore, 1939.

Table 1.3

Rainfall - Lyallpur District - Tahsilwise
(in inches)

Year	Lyallpur	Samundri	Toba Tek Singh	Jaranwala
1898-1903	10.60	-	5.60	-
1903-1908	10.10	7.58	5.54	-
1908-1913	18.18	13.90	11.61	-
1913-1918	16.39	12.50	12.00	-
1918-1923	10.06	8.78	7.06	10.87
1923-1933	12.61	10.90	10.00	12.78

Source: S.R.Lyallpur, 1922 and 1940.

that the rainfall, "scanty as it is, is the crucial factor for an inch or two in a season may make all the difference to a crop sown with canal and well."[22] In this district, due to rain being so scanty, "no man sows unless the river is there to help him, either with the spill of its flood or with its flow underground to his well."[23] It was pointed out that the district was particularly badly off in this respect - "a rough average may be struck at 6½ inches, as compared with 9 inches in Montgomery, 19 inches in Lahore and 37 inches in Gurdaspur" - the three districts immediately to the north of the Multan.[24] It was due to these conditions that the early settlement reports noted that, "irrigation is everything to this district", also underlining, thereby the wisdom displayed by the pre-British rulers in devising a network of inundation canals in this region.[25]

The importance of rainfall, specifically, as well as of water in a general sense was brought out by a number of proverbs popular in Multan district.[26] The importance of winter rains was emphasised thus:

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22. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.94.
23. Ibid.
24. S.R.Multan, 1901, p.5
25. S.R.Multan, 1860, p.3.
26. BETP, PVS, 11, pp.65-67.

> 'je wasse siāl, kade nā pāve kāl' (if it rains in winter, there will never be a famine) further the timing of the winter rain too mattered; 'je wasse phāgan Māhe, tan ann nā māve gāhe, je wasse Phagan cheta, tān ann nā māve khetr' (if it rains in Māgh and Phāggan - January to March, the grain will overflow the threshing floor; if it rains in Phāggan and Cheta - February to April - the grain will overflow the fields themselves.

Summer rains too were important, but the least reliable: "Hunāle di jhari dā ki patā, Mehn dā hik sing sinnā te hik sing sukkā" (a summer shower cannot be trusted, a buffalo's one horn is wet and the other dry).

Above all, water was a prized commodity:

> 'Bhakt wāle di zamin vichon paggu langhde te badbakht di zamin vichon sarak langhdi hai' (a paggu - small water-course - passes through the land of a lucky landlord and a road through that of the luckless.[27]

Needless to add that successful barani cultivation, in most of the district, was out of the question.

Shahpur was equally badly off with regard to rainfall - 7 inches in the Thal, and 12-15 inches in the Sahiwal and Bhera.[28] Lahore was comparatively well-placed, the average rainfall being approximately 20 inches though in this district too variation was considerable, with the extreme east and the extreme west

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27. Ibid., p.86.

28. S.R.Shahpur, 1897, p.4.

getting only about 8 inches.[29] Lahore, like Lyallpur, recorded a tendency on the part of cultivators to speculate in rain.

For Gujranwala, the importance of rain can be assessed from the fact that till the 1890s, 25 per cent of the cultivated area was unirrigated. In the event of a short or ill-distributed rainfall, barani land was left unsown altogether, or, only the best soils, which were cool and retentive of moisture, were sown.[30] Portions of the district, however, including area around Gujranwala city recorded an average of even up to 23 inches of rain, with more than two-thirds of this falling in six months, between April and September.[31] The village survey in Gajju Chak, showed yet another example of the "gamble in rains", which resulted in a larger area that was dependent on rainfall being returned as Kharaba.[32]

Despite perennial irrigation, the importance of rainfall remained. Timely winter rains could, for instance, favourably affect the outturns of Rabi crops;

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29. S.R.Lahore, 1893, p.3

30. S.R.Gujranwala, 1889-94, p.3

31. BEIP, PVS, 6, p.v.

32. Ibid.

deprecations of the bollworm too were somewhat arrested by a good monsoon.[33]

In later years, when the canal department showed a tendency to reduce outlets and economise water, rain once again acquired importance. Moreover, certain crops eg. wheat and gram, depended more on timely rains.[34]

As the problem of waterlogging increased, it was noted that before land was totally thrown out of cultivation, it was put under barani cultivation for two or three years.[35]

Thus a bad year in this respect could result in less area maturing than normally. The statistics for rain when compared with matured area, "forcibly illustrate the supplementary function of rainfall even in a tract which is rendered secure by one of the most perfect systems of canal irrigation in the world."[36] The Samundri tahsil report attributed this to the fact that: "satisfactory as irrigation is, zamindars in their gamble for maturing cent per cent of allotted area count on a normal rainfall... On the whole rainfall is so distributed as to materially assist in maturing the rabi and more particularly the kharif crops."[37]

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33. A.R.Gugera, LCC, para 5.
34. A.R., Rakh Branch, LCC, 1913, para 5.
35. Orders on Rakh Branch, Sheikhupura, Pro.2., p.1, in A.R. Lahore, 1939.
36. A.R. Lyallpur, 1936, pp.6-7.
37. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.9.

Table: 1.4

SHAHPUR

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.

(Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA Govt. Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells	Total area of crops irrigated	Population
1884	409463	1156890	-	-	62407	274248	-	336655	421508
1888	489742	3053**	-	-	33774	31650	175444	240868	,,
1893	551704	1779289	260608*	134721	50522	29280	172086	251888	493535
1898	554437	1213896	749525	195136	62635	298 02	177720	270157	,,
1903	843677	1231905	478735	137111	278313	52959	146008	477280	-
1908	902015	1181853	409627	387727	555329	40624	118976	721831	524259
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	1188118	987204	394894	141950	665647	63960	107721	867794	-
1921	1109170	966976	391817	331421	659294	43134	111803	841630	-
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	1429130	747745	359539	166591	720876	57481	95328	893536	821490
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	1292427	775561	350461	250331	794990	-	113795	992602	-

* Out of this 792 acres are cultivated.
** Area in Sq. Miles.

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
ASBI, Relevant years 1903-1938

Table: 1.5

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.

(Area in Acres)

GUJRANWALA

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA Govt. Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells	Total area of crops irrigated	Population
1884	619021	394223	-	-	-	451393	-	451393	616892
1888	595023	1210*	-	-	6042	-	436990	444221	,,
1893	720097	867270	1806	135697	128068	-	358336	487221	690061
1898	730218	728689	16707	257175	235322	-	359206	645112	,,
1903	1038714	599168	5346	119355	418795	-	290863	713373	-
1908	782532	592774	5457	385198	373365	-	306503	694480	890577
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	1400294	675021	2690	673021	727875	-	317929	1075621	-
1921	723980	340929	2692	194469	359928	-	281181	664821	623615
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	825442	361704	884	90442	295591	-	320147	639886	736138
1937	817639	368284	885	91563	341359	-	461941	833371	736138
1938	829453	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Area in Sq. Miles.

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
AJDI, Relevant years 1903-1938

Table: 1.6

JHANG

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.

(Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA Govt. Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells	Total area of crops irrigated	Population irrigation
1884	344977 348830	839500	-	-	-	242427	-	242427	395296*
1888	349702	5136+		-	-	-	266007	267941	,,
1893	413362	3032923	27144	16486	30965	-	282638	315569	436821**
1898	794285	1540784	12828	17171	500460	2122	269846	783162	436821
1903/4	1711285	1996461	-	204795	1471260	4135	245869	1723000	-
1908	573543	1178437	-	166132	317845	182	196827	534771	458692
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	706608	1115006	359	142464	411467	392	215376	644124	-
1921	648218	1106351	359	203850	419630	-	199249	635460	570639
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	776629	1036328	359	146732	410652	-	248279	674093	664833
1938	747853	1038065	359	159780	452350	-	257353	726862	664833

* Based on the Census of February 1881
** Based on Jengus 1991
+ Area in Sq. Miles.

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
A3BI, Relevant years 1903-1938

LYALLPUR

Table: I.7
INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.
(Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA			Total area of crops irrigated	Population
					Govt. Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells		
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1888	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1893	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1898	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1903/4	1176393	549837	-	137441	1265505	-	1238	-	-
1908	1227172	462407	-	157027	1351027	-	1584	-	578084
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	1383197	444235	55727	86014	1463006	-	14909	1573145	-
1921	1379987	406688	47567	134808	1514477	-	12749	1613365	880252
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	1439245	543880	-	117702	1536993	-	28916	1615784	1169307
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	1390155	508439	-	170952	1519524	-	40770	1596738	-

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
AJBI, Relevant years 1903-1938

Table: I.8

MONTGOMERY

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.
(Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forest	Fallow	Govt Canals	Pvt Canals	Wells	Total area of crops irrigated	Population
1884	370030	3052490	-	-	84702	191091	-	275793	426529
1888	401908	4769	-	-	110670	6295	184733	301698	,,
1893	535851	2354947	550007	20330	229136	3548	162117	394801	499449
1898	467604	2348263	541561	51291	223465	10808	164079	408632	,,
1903	575893	1761061	349663	104905	171618	3722	217302	-	-
1908	460301	1588939	347605	325147	135970	851	257679	-	463586
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	908221	1467057	81064	144252	528223	3501	257062	814841	-
1921	978807	1391317	83011	256037	733026	-	229667	1003080	712667
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	1410358	799953	22811	219750	1322602	-	189252	1538718	999772
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	1459250	738255	23044	232944	1441390	-	176552	1650943	-

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
ASBI, Relevant years 1903-1938

LAHORE

Table: I.9

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC. (Area in Acres).

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forest - Waste	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA Govt Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells	Total area of crop irrigated	Population
1884	1,186,385 944,489	738,156	-	-	239,803	308,880	-	548,688	924,106
1888	969,849	1,403	-	-	276,355	-	322,350	610,633	,,
1893	1,075,788	535,743	230,064	194,555	326,693	-	284,179	641,243	1,055,619
1898	998,891	555,433	212,216	268,724	478,643	-	308,638	820,143	,,
1903	1,173,152	515,076	160,181	185,006	606,496	-	272.551	941,008	-
1908	868,925	462,548	108,681	587,569	556,119	-	283,948	907,004	1,162,109
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	1,163,694	273,964	47,198	77,628	705,680	-	218,367	954,030	-
1921	854,362	270,001	32,867	328,647	647,339	-	214,677	891,791,	1,129,474
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	1,108,677	235,201	27,624	72,082	856,150	-	207,037	1091,749	1,378,570
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	1,003,968	256,097	25,158	147,109	823,440	-	234,499	1088,175	-

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
ASBI, Relevant years 1903-1938

Table: I.10

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.

MULTAN (Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallow	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA Govt. Canals	Pvt. Canals	Wells	Total area of crops irrigated	Population
1883 1884	548672/ 518622	2917462	-	-	326057	97732	-	423789	551964
1888/ 1889	619755	4721*	-	-	357125	48411	113428	527540	,,
1893/ 1894	730222	2644240	118803	49602	446439	63381	104943	623837	620859
1898/ 1899	775960	2458254	137470	202911	568352	9970	107920	693138	,,
1903/ 1904	852988	2452240	111681	133469	555615	6917	80771	636303	,,
1908	779312	2326392	115,303	315503	510487	14413	221896	764638	710626
1913/ 1917 (4 Yrs)	1095188	1962015	112921	199394	979134	17128	94254	1110687	-
1921	1072330	1844767	68130	358319	807132	13849	204850	1051997	872376
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933	1501805	1426965	37903	242028	1499209	-	50263	1588468	1156941
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1938	1613992	1289399	48495	267939	1485365	-	136224	1662707	-

Source: PAR, Relevant years upto 1898
ASBI, Relevant years 1903-1938

* Area in Sq. Miles.

SHEIKHUPURA

Table: I.11

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA ETC.

(Area in Acres)

Year	Net Area Sown/Cropped	Culturable Waste	Forests	Fallows	TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA			Total area of crops irri. gated	Popula-tion
					Govt Canals	Pvt Canals	Wells		
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1888	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1893	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1898	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1903	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1913	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1921	611996	363806	3983	164083	537365	-	73696	621748	403079
1928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1933/34	862312	317678	3757	113706	595207	-	159859	773245	896732
1937	838212	309877	3895	111055	-	-	-	-	-
1938	814429	291285	9952	111055	669537	-	180537	868839	896732

Source: ASBI, Relevant years 1921-1938.

* District formed only in 1918.

Section II - Irrigation in the Regional Economy

Clearly, the history of this region was closely interwoven with that of the rivers. In fact the shifting course of the rivers and change in the riverain tracts brought about a series of changes in district and tahsil boundaries. Two new districts viz., Lyallpur and Sheikhupura were carved out in 1904 and 1919 respectively in this period, while district gazetteers outline numerous changes manifest in the formation of new tahsils, transfer of old tahsils or, transfer of several estates from one district to another - all attempts to cope with the changing physical and human geography of the region. These changes, in a way, represented the spreading arms of the administration extending its influence deeper, as canal extensions penetrated the wild interiors.

Even before the advent of the canal system in its modern form, the rivers played a prominent part in the life of the people. Given the nature and scale of the pre-British economy, the inundations, the river deposits, percolation of moisture and so on, were all factors which governed the life of the inhabitants of the region. For the people on their part, pastoral nomads or settled agriculturists - all activity, as well as the perception of it, seemed to revolve around the rivers. The canal system that the British extended to Punjab only enhanced this, making them more dependent and perhaps vulnerable.

The centrality of the rivers and their numerous streams had struck the rulers of Punjab long before the British arrived on the scene. The Mughals and their chieftains, as well as the Sikh rulers of Punjab, had realised the impossibility of extending cultivation in the region without adequate facilities for irrigation. Both had, consequently, initiated a process of digging wells and canals in the region. Although, compared to the grandiose schemes launched by the British, these were very modest, nevertheless these had formed the basis of a vast system of inundation canals which were state or privately owned. The first of these, the Hasli Canal, constructed by the Mughal Officer, Ali Mardan Khan, to provide water for fountains and the Shalimar Gardens in the Lahore region, later came to form a part of the Bari Doāb Canal.[38]

What stands out as a remarkable feature of the early canals was that natural drainage channels formed the basis and backbone of the system. The pre-British rulers of Punjab, in undertaking canal construction seem to have taken the easy way out, and perhaps the wiser step, of extending these natural drainage channels to form inundation canals which provided irrigation necessary for cultivation, without greatly altering or obstructing their natural courses.

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38. S.R.Lahore, 1865-69, p.6.

The Gujranwala district gazetteer, for instance, refers to several nālās, natural depressions generally marking drainage lines, which formed channels for flood water in the rains and the chhambs, ponds or marshes, which were formed by the overflow from the nālās: "these often had a great fertilizing effect on the soil;"[39] the Phalku, Aik, Khot, Degh and the Vāgh nālās were some of the important ones mentioned in the gazetteer.

A Superintending Engineer on the Chenab Canal observed a similar phenomenon: "The Khunsarwālā Drainage is probably an old drainage line which perhaps in ancient times used to flow from the hills or was fed from the river. The other doābs in the Punjab contain similar well-marked nālās with sites of old towns on their banks."[40] The nālās too changed course at times, affecting the spring level around, rendering the wells useless, "thus compelling the population to abandon their lands and residence and to migrate to other tracts."[41]

An early settlement report for Jhang district referring to the old canals pointed out that the only canal in working order in this 1870s was the Wakefield

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39. D.G., Gujranwala, op.cit., p.3.

40. C.C.G., op.cit., p.4.

41. Ibid.

Wāh in Shorkot, devised by Niamat Rai and Wakefield; but "there are a few other cuts from the river in various villages made to assist and guide the flow of the flood water inland."[42] The Settlement Officer, observing that "the benefits conferred by small inundation canals in a district so circumstanced as Jhang, are simply inestimable," advocated the extension of this system by "a series of small canals carrying the flood water in land to the villages which sometimes get flooded and sometimes not."[43] The Officer, Steedman, was of the firm opinion that, "for many years to come, no canals whatever, except such as are intended to protect and extend existing cultivation carried on by existing cultivators, should be excavated."[44]

Montgomery was not very different. In this district, numerous budhs - inlets or creeks - were to be found along the rivers. These would fill during floods and be transformed into lakes when the river fell; the lakes thus formed would be used for irrigation by means of jhāllar. The budhs would be the places most suited for the heads of small water-courses which the people sometimes constructed. The whole

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42. S.R. Jhang, op.cit., p. 12.

43. Ibid., p. 14.

44. Ibid., p. 15.

district, between the central ridge and the rivers was cut up by these old nālās, which were, "of considerable importance as regards the extension of irrigation in the district, as most of the proposals to this effect make the utilisation of one or more of these channels their basis."[45] Though a later gazetteer denied this, the fact seems to have been that the nālās in Dipalpur and Pakpattan tahsils, more prominently the Khanwāh, Sohāg and Pārā - exemplified the older practice of making use of stream beds for irrigation supply. The Khad, Bishārat and Ding nālās too continued to be important.[46] In Montgomery, as in other districts, cultivation in the earlier period, was mostly confined to the land close along the rivers and to the tracts irrigated by inundation Canals.

As noted earlier, most of the land in Shahpur district consisted of good soil which only required irrigation to produce fine crops. Inundation from the Jhelum served this very purpose. Cultivation in this district was by and large confined to a strip varying from three to fifteen miles in width along the river bank. The cultivation zone was divided into the Hithār and Nākkā, of which the former constituted the

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45. D.G.Montgomery, 1934, p.7.

46. Ibid.

alluvial tract bordering the rivers - contained the finest villages where almost every acre was brought under cultivation during the rabi without any irrigation being required to bring crops to maturity. Although the nākkā lay beyond the fertilizing influence of the inundations, yet here too cultivation could be carried on with some effort at artificial irrigation.[47] The success of agriculture in Shahpur district, no doubt, depended on the annual floods from its rivers, particularly the Jhelum, which flowed through the length of the district. A remarkable feature of inundation from the Jhelum was the sudden freshets to which it was subject. After heavy rains in the hills, the swollen stream, over-leafing its banks, would inundate the country for miles on either side and then gradually subside within its normal bounds. These freshets, kangs as they were known, would seldom last more than one or two days, but in favourable seasons several of these inundations would take place. As the gazetteer pointed out, "it is not easy to exaggerate the beneficial effect produced on the large area thus submerged."[48] In the

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47. D.G.Shahpur, 1883-84, p.2

48. Ibid., p.78. It was earlier noted rights in irrigation from these channels and canals, formed "an important class of rights". In the case of most of the well-defined torrents, the water was divided "in accordance with traditional shares by erecting long embankments of stone and earth in the bed of the torrent soon after it debouches from the hills." Although the division was sought to be organised, the disputes were often the causes of riots. cf. S.R. Shahpur, 1897, p.50.

hills and sub-montane tracts more than 50,000 acres benefitted by the water that was brought down the slopes by torrents. "This water is most carefully caught up and passed down from terrace to terrace by a system of dams, channels and embankments arranged with minute care and kept up with constant toil."[49] Needless to say that quarrels over the right to raise ridges etc. were not an infrequent occurrence.

Apart from the natural drainage that Shahpur benefitted from, it had had a network of inundation canals which, although they had formed a distinct feature of the agricultural system, had for some time fallen into disuse. Around 1860s one of these old channels was cleared up and the success of this led to several others being excavated entirely on private enterprise.[50] By the 1890s, i.e. even before the opening of the Lower Jhelum Canal, approximately over 80,000 acres of land was canal-irrigated.[51] By the beginning of the twentieth century there were three Imperial Canals, one Provincial Canal and twelve private canals in existence. At least half the area irrigated by inundation canals at this time drew water

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49. S.R.Shahpur, 1917, p.2

50. D.G. Shahpur, op.cit., p.78.

51. S.R. Shahpur, 1897, p.2

from the private canals. The Sāhib Khānwālā, excavated by Sāhib Khan Tiwānā alone irrigated over 13,500 acres. There were at least three others irrigating over 5,000 acres of land.[52]

These canals ordinarily began to flow with the rise in the river towards the end of March or early in April. Till the end of June the supply was regular, after which irregular supply continued till the end of August or early September. The water in these canals was heavily charged with silt and was invaluable for the alkaline soil.[53]

Multan, like Shahpur, placed heavy dependence on river action and inundation canals. Within the district, the tract between the riverain and the Bār formed the sphere of action of the inundation canals.[54] Since the district was particularly unfortunate in the matter of rainfall, inundation acquired special significance. But the uncertainty which went hand in hand with inundation often accentuated agriculturists' loss. This was particularly true if the timing of the rise and fall in the river did not coincide with that of agricultural operations. Only if the flood set in at the proper time

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52. D.G. Shahpur, 1917, p.195.

53. S.R. Shahpur, 1917, p.2

54. D.G. Multan, p.9.

and also subsided at the proper time, was the kharif secure and the prospects of Rabi sowings also looked up. If the flood set in late, there was a shrinkage in area under kharif, especially cotton, but rabi crops were not affected if it subsided in time. On the other hand, if the flood aet in at the right time but subsided too soon, the cultivator had to choose, between foregoing wheat, or a considerable portion of the kharif. If the flood set in late and yet subsided early, there was a shrinkage in kharif as well as in the rabi.[55] But what mattered in Multan was that although the Chenab floods varied in intensity, they almost never entirely failed. In Multan too, the early nineteenth century rulers had well understood the importance of canal irrigation and constructed several canals. Diwan Sawan Mal's work in this sphere was particularly notable. Most of these canals, were found to be in use at the time of annexation as well. The Sidhnai, a semi-perennial canal was an excellent example of this pre-British enterprise. The Matithal, the Hajwah and the Ghulamwah were some of the other main canals, apart from several smaller channels feeding a vast network of villages.[56]

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55. BEIP, PVS, 11, p.87.

56. cf. A.R.Kabirwala, 1920 and also A.R. Mailsi 1920.

Along with canals, wells were an important means of irrigation in the pre-British economy. These too were directly linked to the state of the rivers as well as rainfall since both affected the level of the water-table. Tables 1.4 to 1.11 give the area irrigated by wells in the period before Colonisation and after. The importance of wells continued even after extension of perennial irrigation to the region, though the changes that came about in the drainage patterns tended to adversely affect the wells and well-irrigated land.

Section III - Migration: Spatial and Temporal Patterns

The physical geography of this region had a direct bearing on its human geography. The natural resources and irrigation from these could support a limited level and scale of agriculture. This, while giving the region a distinct character, brought it out in rather bad light in the eyes of the colonial rulers, who constantly compared these districts with the more prosperous districts of central Punjab. The 1881 Census, not surprisingly described the region later to be covered by the Colonisation scheme as follows:

> Over this range great herds of camels thrive on the saline herbage, and of cattle, sheep and goats. They are tended by a nomad population which moves with its flock from place

> to place as the grass is consumed and the scanty supply of water afforded by the local hollows exhausted...[57]

Jhang meanwhile was described as a "singularly backward district".[58] Attention was drawn to conditions in Gujranwala, where the "density of population on total area is exceedingly small, this district includes a large area of arid pastures which have at present no irrigation, and the population per square mile of cultivated area is exceedingly high."[59]

The Report on the 1931 Census in Punjab, while no doubt exaggerating, was not too wide of the mark when it stated that:

> four decades back it was the existence of the five rivers rather than their utility, which conferred the name on the Province. Now those rivers do not merely exist in name, but have been rendered a valuable asset by the engineer's skill, and all of them have to their credit magnificent canal systems, which have brought fertilising water to millions of acres of arid land and thus provided livelihood for a considerable portion of the provincial population and have brought into existence prosperous colony towns and flourishing villages...[60]

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57. This tract covering Multan Division, Bahawalpur state and the two Deras, Shahpur, Gujranwala, parts of Gujarat and Lahore, encompassed two-fifths of the province but less than one-fifth of the total cultivated area. Census Report, 1881, p.5.

58. Ibid.

In the fifty years between 1881 and 1931, the population of the Province had risen by 37 per cent. Although the increase was not confined to the Colony districts, these did emerge as a focal point. As the 1931 Census pointed out, "the population is gravitating towards the south-west, where the Canal Colonies are situated."[61]

Earlier, Calvert had drawn attention to the phenomenal rise in the population of the Colony districts:

Table 1.12

Population Variation
(figures in thousand)

	1881	1931	Percentage
In five colony districts	1,732	4,912	281.8
Two Central districts	1,641	2,274	139.0
Four unirrigated districts (Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Attock, Mianwali)	1,671	2,171	130.0

Source: Calvert, E.H., 1925, op.cit., p.125.

However, lest the variation percentage exaggerate the rise and misrepresent the situation, it is necessary to consider the figures in the accompanying table (Table 1.13) which show the density per square mile for the

61. Ibid., pp.63-64.

Table: 1.13

DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE

District	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Gujranwala	251	286	321	262	270	319	395
Sheikhupura	152	174	227	235	253	303	370
Montgomery	79	94	97	109	155	226	316
Shahpur	80	100	102	135	150	172	209
Lyallpur	17	15	184	264	323	368	396
Jhang	113	117	124	152	166	193	241
Multan	95	109	122	140	153	202	263
Lahore	296	334	384	382	432	527	653
Gujrat	284	315	352	351	367	410	488
Jullundur	552	634	694	606	622	713	845
Ferozepur	174	207	234	235	269	283	355
Amritsar	561	623	651	560	591	711	899
Hoshiarpur	401	450	455	422	426	475	533
Gurdaspur	436	500	509	453	462	526	625
Sialkot	524	572	592	553	557	622	755

Source: Census, Punjab, Tables, 1941, Subsidiary tables, p.17.
Census, Punjab, Report, 1921. p.97 for columns 1 and 2.

Note: The 1921 Census figures are sometimes different from those in 1941 census tables. Here the 1921 figures have been taken for 1881 and 1891 only.

Colony districts and some of the other congested districts.[62]

The density figures show that although the net variation in percentage terms is fairly high for most of the Colony Districts, density per square mile was above 500 on an average for the congested districts of central Punjab, Ferozepur being an exception with only 355, while Amritsar shows an all time high of 899. Meanwhile in the Colony districts the highest population density occurred in Lyallpur, viz., 396.

From the variation taole (Table 1.14), it is clear that between 1891 and 1941, the highest variation was registered in Lyallpur, being 13 lakhs, with Montgomery coming a close second. The table shows that of all the Punjab districts, there were six which registered a gain in population of over 5 lakhs between 1891 and 1941. Of these six, three were clearly Colony districts: Lyallpur, Montgomery and Shahpur, while two otners, Multan and Lahore were districts where canal irrigation and Colonization had made some headway. Ferozepur alone was out of the range of Colonization.

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62. Ibid. The Census warns against over-estimation of a rise in population as expressed in percentages since certain districts which were sparsely populated show a high percentage of increase without the population having approached the density of the older districts.

Table: 1.14

VARIATION IN POPULATION OVER FIFTY YEARS:

District	1891	1941	Variation
Gujranwala	661,223	912,234	+ 251,011
Sheikhupura	401,262	852,508	+ 451,246
Shahpur	478,289	998,921	+ 520,632
Montgomery	416,559	1,329,103	+ 912,544
Lyallpur	60,306	1,396,305	+1,335,999
Jhang	402,341	821,631	+ 419,290
Multan	621,158	1,484,333	+ 863,175
Lahore	898,790	1,695,375	+ 796,585
Ferozepur	886,078	1,423,076	+ 536,998
Hoshiarpur	1,011,465	1,170,323	+ 158,858
Jullundur	907,583	1,127,190	+ 219,607
Ludhiana	648,722	818,615	+ 169,893
Amritsar	993,039	1,413,876	+ 420,837
Gurdaspur	943,922	1,153,511	+ 209,589
Sialkot	961,600	1,190,497	+ 228,897
Ambala	864,719	847,745	- 16,974

Source: Census, Punjab, Tables, 1941, p.14.

Note: During this period the boundaries of Gujranwala, Jhang and Lahore underwent extensive change, while two new districts, Lyallpur and Sheikhupura came into existenece. However, the Census, 1941, carries an explanatory note that these changes have been taken into account while compiling the stastical tables.

However, another interesting feature that emerges after a comparison of this table with the previous is that it was districts which had a low density to begin with, which registered a sharp increase and thereby a high percentage of net variation. Amongst the non-Colony districts, Ferozepur was one such example.

Here it may also be pointed out that population increase in the Colonies, although consistent in terms of census figures, was subject to minor set-backs from year to year. The temporary decrease was generally due to the ravages of plague, malaria, influenza and other such diseases which seem to have accompanied the extension of canal irrigation. These at times assumed epidemic proportions. However, the decline never persisted, with the result that despite high mortality, there was no actual decline visible in the census statistics.[63] The 1921 Census had reported that deaths due to fevers, including malaria, had been the highest - 22.88 per cent in the rural areas, with plague coming next, 6.53 per cent, in the countryside. Malaria was undoubtedly the most important public health problem in the Punjab. Further, it was 'essentially a rural problem' which assumed grave proportions with the extension of canal irrigation.[64]

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63. Census, Punjab, Report 1921, p.62.

64. cf. Review of Health Conditions and Public Health Work in Punjab, 1942, pp.10-11.

Temporary shifts at times also took place due to migration of tenants within Colonies from one circle to a new circle.[65] On other occasions an increase could also reflect the return of a nomadic population, left with no option but to be reconciled to canal irrigation, rather than an actual increase in persons supported by the soil.[66]

The phenomenon of migration to the Canal Colonies was an outstanding feature of the Punjab's economy and society since the 1890s. The Report of the 1931 Census observed that migration to the Canal Colonies was "an example of the largest wholesale permanent migration within the Province," and went on to remark that, "this movement which has been operating for the last forty years or so is unlikely to show for some time to come any signs of abatement."[67] The significance of the scale on which this migration was taking place can be estimated from the fact that between 1901 and 1931, the numbers of persons who migrated into the Canal Colonies from other districts of the Punjab itself was 16 lakhs.

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65. A.R. Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit., p.1523.

66. Rev.Agri.Rev., November 1914, A.Pro. 4, File 404, p.2577.

67. Census Punjab, Report, 1931, p.17.

Table 1.15

Distribution of Migration to Colonies During Three Decades

Colony	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	Total	%
Lower Chenab Colony	608,847	517,878	N.A.	1126725	66.8
Lower Jhelum Colony	141,073	35,107	N.A.	176180	10.4
Upper Bari Doab Colony	-	141,524	N.A.	141524	8.3
Total	749,920	694,509	240398	1684326	14.2
Percentage	44.5	41.2	14.2		99.7

Sources: Census Punjab, 1911, Tables, Statement XI A Pt. I & II.
Census Punjab, 1921, Tables, Statement XI A Pt. I & II.
Census Punjab, 1931, Report, p.117.

As is clear from the table, the largest migration occurred between 1901 and 1911, 44.5 per cent of total migration to Canal Colonies up to 1931. The figures for the next two decades being 41.2 per cent in 1921 and 14.2 per cent in 1931. This migration was almost entirely of a permanent kind with 42 per cent of the migration between 1901 and 1921 comprising of female immigrants.

Further, since Colonization of different districts, or, at times, of different parts of the same district depended on the extension of the proposed canal branch ,

the migration was not uniformly distributed over time and area. Thus, 81.18 per cent of the total migration which took place between 1901 and 1911 was to the Lower Chenab Colony, the first and also the biggest to be established and, only 18.81 per cent to the Lower Jhelum Colony. In the years 1911-1921 again, the largest migration was to the Lower Chenab Colony, viz. 74.5 per cent, while the Upper Bari Doab drew 20.37 per cent of the migrants and the Lower Jhelum Colony only 5.05 per cent.

In his study of internal migration in India, Zachariah too observed that "the movement towards canal zones in the Punjab formed one of the major intrastate migrations during 1901-1931".[68] He ascribed the stream of migration to the construction of irrigation canals and the promise of economic advance that it held forth, resulting, at this time, in a greater level of intra-state migration than interstate migration.[69]

Social Response to Opportunity to Colonize

The large-scale migration to the Canal Colonies that took place in this period forms a backdrop to almost all discussion on development, social mobility,

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68. Zachariah, K.C., 1964, p.218.

69. Ibid., p.216.

wages and so on. The question that looms large really then is what led to this large scale migration? More so, if the migration is posed vis-a-vis one of the most common proverbs of the region, viz., "ghar ki ādhi, bāhir ki sāri". The proverb was substantiated repeatedly by observations in the Reports of the Indian Famine Commission: "there is a great unwillingness on the part of the mass to go more than two or three days' journey from their homes and they are strongly impressed with the idea that, if they hold out long enough, they will be provided for nearer home."[70]

Government, pressed upon to open canal digging operations as relief work in the face of extreme famine and scarcity conditions assured the population that, "generally in the Punjab there will be one such canal project in hand" and, the labourers were told, "they would be reached there free of charge, would be fed and cared for en route, brought back at the end etc."[71] However, as per the admission of the Commission, with a few exceptions they all said they would not go. The Commission came to the conclusion that "no big work started at a troublesome distance would have tempted these people to crowd to it; they preferred to undergo debilitation at home..."[72]

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70. I.F.C., Punjab, Evidence, 1898, App. Vol. VI, p.49.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., p.60.

That this unwillingness to go further away from home was not entirely based on irrationality was supported by another Report of the Famine Commission which stated:

> an illustration of the dangers to which even legitimate drafting is exposed, is afforded by an interesting experience in Hissar. The local programmes of work being thought inadequate and labour being in demand upon the Jhelum Canal, it was proposed to transport to the canal some 80,000 volunteers from the Hissar district. The usual absurd rumours were promptly circulated, and eventually some 11,500 persons only were willing to go. On arrival at their destination cholera broke out among them and carried off- upon a careful estimate - about 1,000 of their number. In addition, it is estimated that some 1,260 persons deserted in that cholera panic. On the approach of the monsoon less than 6,000 of those who had been deported were railed back to Hissar. Some 500 stayed on the canals and the balance of more than 2,000 cannot be accounted for.[73]

In view of the above, the subsequent scramble to the Canal Colonies seemed unimaginable at the end of the 19th century. What then prompted it? While it would be wrong to put forth any simplistic answers to the complex phenomenon of migration on such a large scale, it may be worthwhile to take note of some of the explanations the Census sought to give.

In 1931 the Census Report for the Punjab noted that the total rise in population in districts such as

Jullundhur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Rohtak, Hissar, Gurgaon, Dera Ghazi Khan and Muzzafargarh was less than the natural increase, indicating that emigration was perhaps a factor accounting for this trend. Attempting an explanation of this the Report said that "in these districts the population has reached a state where its pressure is being felt on the resources."[74] It further argued that, "migration tends to equalize the pressure on the resources of certain districts, from which there is a steady stream of emigration to the Canal Colonies."[75] Whereas in the past these districts had supported a large population, they were at the same time faced with a serious situation, "owing to the receding spring level and diminished rainfall."[76] The Census stated that migration held no attraction for the agricultural population, "except when it is calculated to relieve the pressure on resources by holding out a better agricultural prospect and its attendant profits in the form of the lease, occupancy or ownership of colony land."[77]

The prevalence of famine conditions in another part of the Province, or, even in a neighbouring non-colony tahsil could start off a process of migration.

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74. Census, Punjab, Report 1931, p.71.

75. Ibid., p.73.

76. Ibid., p.77

77. Ibid., p.119.

Thus at the end of the nineteenth century, when famine conditions prevailed in Sharakpur tahsil, and the people "realised the impossibility of saving their cattle if they stayed at home, many families immigrated... many villages were left half-empty and, in two only one family remained."[78]

Thus while for some Colonisation offered an opportunity to explore the possibility of economic benefit in newer lands at a time when similar opportunities at home seemed to have been nearly exhausted, for others, migration was concomitant with a decline or deterioration in status in the original home. Here it seems necessary to point towards the partial reversal in population trends being caused by the establishment of Canal Colonies. For, a fact that is not obvious from the migration figures of just these years is that some of the Colonies, into which migration was taking place comprised of districts which uptil now were districts from which there had been a net outflow of population rather than inflow. The 1881 Census, for instance had noted the following about Jhang district:

> it gives population to every district in the list except Gujranwala and the emigrants are nearly twice as numerous as the immigrants.[79]

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78. Rev. Agri. Fam., April 1898, A. Pro. 30-37, File 39, p. 1705.

79. Census, Punjab, Report, 1881, p. 85.

Migration from Jhang in the early period was into the districts of Lahore, Shahpur, Multan, Montgomery, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan, all of which were immediately neighbouring districts.

In the period 1901-21, on the other hand, migrants to the Lower Chenab Colony which included Jhang district came from at least eighteen districts of Punjab Province. Of these in the first decade, Sialkot, Amritsar, Jullundur and Montgomery supplied over 68,000 each; Gurdaspur over 50,000; Hoshiarpur over 48,000; Ludhiana, Gujrat and Lahore over 25,000 each while Ambala gave 17,000; Multan, Shahpur and Ferozepur between 10,000 and 13,000; and lastly the princely states of Kapurthala and Patiala contributed approximately 8,000 each. In the next ten years, 1911-21, Amritsar, Jullundur, Sialkot and Montgomery maintained their earlier lead of providing approximately 65,000 and above, along with Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts which gave between 42,000 and 47,000, Lahore, Ludhiana, Gujarat and Ambala were next with 16,000 migrants to 20,000 and above; Ferozepur and Shahpur gave over 8,500 each; and Mianwali, Multan, Kapurthala and Patiala just over 5,000 each (Table 1.16).

Although immigration into Lower Jhelum Colony tracts took place from almost as many districts as into

Table 1.16

Immigrants to Colonies

District	1901-1911		1911-1921			Total for all colonies
	L.C.C.	L.J.C.	L.C.C.	L.J.C.	U.B.D.C.	
Ambala	17242	-	16483	-	-	2449
Kangra	1594	-	-	-	-	1327
Hoshiarpur	44234	-	46356	-	10749	17490
Jullundur	70847	-	72692	373	20067	24664
Ludhiana	28306	1663	22044	347	2128	11144
Ferozepur	10813	-	8982	-	6785	17433
Lahore	28176	-	26787	-	15134	22229
Amritsar	81144	6230	70942	1223	9004	32665
Gurdaspur	52701	-	42621	-	6735	15952
Sialkot	96984	29257	70502	4471	7320	26047
Gujrat	25174	30049	18974	7900	2381	21896
Shahpur	12367	-	8424	-	3065	-
Mianwali	5856	-	5122	-	3357	4039
Montgomery	68581	-	64364	-	-	-
Multan	12671	-	5945	-	-	-
Kapurthala	8129	-	5257	-	-	-
Patiala	8324	-	5258	-	-	-
Kashmir	3664	1701	2979	658	-	-
Lyallpur	-	-	-	-	14807	-
Gujranwala	-	12025	-	2229	2272	-
Jhelum	-	16168	-	9695	2307	10865
Jhang	-	20912	-	4606	10136	-
Hissar	-	-	-	-	-	3057
Rohtak	-	-	-	-	-	3264
Gurgaon	-	-	-	-	-	2877
Karnal	-	-	-	-	-	1142
Simla	-	-	-	-	-	62
Rawalpindi	-	-	-	-	-	5777
Bahawalpur	-	-	-	-	-	5853
Muzaffargarh	-	-	-	-	-	6705
Dera Ghazi Khan	-	-	-	-	-	3460
Total	608847	141073	517878	35107	141524	240,398

Source: Census Punjab 1911, Tables, Statement, XI A, Pt.I & II.
Census Punjab 1921, Tables, Statement XI A, Pt.I & II.
Census Punjab 1931, Report, p.117.

L.C.C. - Lower Chenab Canal Colony
L.J.C. - Lower Jhelum Canal Colony
U.B.D.C. - Upper Bari Doab Canal Colony.

the Lower Chenab Colony, the former Colony being smaller, attracted fewer migrants. Here the highest migration, approximately 30,000 was from Gujrat district, between 1901 and 1911. Surprisingly Jhang which was itself receiving migrants on such a large scale also saw over 20,000 people leave the district to settle in the Lower Jhelum Colony. A possible explanation for this could be that the migrants from Jhang were nomadic herdsmen who found grants for animal husbandry more attractive than peasant grants. Alternatively, it could also be proof of the older, indigenous population of Jhang being thrown out while migrants from other districts of Punjab received moderate to lavish grants of secure land. Indigenous settlers referred to as Janglis and Hithāris, were for long the object of official indifference or hostility. The Chenab Settlement Report recorded that in 1915, by which time land allotment in this Colony was almost over, only 35.4 per cent of the land was allotted to indigenous settlers; that too was controlled by landowning and allied castes as perceived by the British. The rest had to forfeit whatever rights, customary or otherwise they had hitherto enjoyed in the now Colonised portions of these districts.[80]

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80. S.R. Chenab, op.cit., p.43.

Apart from Gujrat and Jhang, Gujranwala and Jhelum supplied between 12,000 to 20,000 immigrants to the Lower Jhelum Colony between 1901 and 1911, while Amritsar gave only 6,000. The total migration to Lower Jhelum Colony between 1911 and 1921 was comparatively small, approximately 35,000, which came to just over 5 per cent of total migration in this decade. This came mainly from the neighbouring districts of Jhelum, Gujrat, Sialkot and Jhang, while Amritsar provided only 1,223 immigrants to the Colony.

It appears that in the period 1911 to 1921 the Upper Bārī Doāb Colony proved to be a greater attraction than the Lower Jhelum Colony. As can be seen from Table 1.16, 20 per cent of the migration in these years was to the Upper Bārī Doāb Colony. Of this the largest combined migration, approximately 25,000, was from Jhang and Lyallpur districts. The single largest immigration took place from Jullundur, 20,000, with Lahore coming next providing 15,000 emigrants. Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Sialkot, Ferozepur and Gurdaspur provided between 5,000 and 10,000 emigrants each.

The 1931 figures show that migrants to all Canal Colony districts came primarily from Amritsar, Sialkot, Gujrat, Jullundur, Lahore, Jhelum, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur and Gurdaspur.

Before proceeding any further it is necessary to point out that migration to Canal Colony districts was

not the sole example of intra-district movement of population in Punjab. Besides this clear drift towards the Colonies, there was considerable movement of people from Hissar to Ferozepur e.g., or from Hoshiarpur to Jullundur, while Jullundur itself was pouring out migrants to the Colonies.[81] Nevertheless, what is notable is that throughout this period, "the number of persons, who came from outside and settled in the Punjab, or of those who leave the province to settle elsewhere is infinitesmal as compared with the number of migrants to Canal Colonies."[82]

Another point to be noted is that while from the Census figures the population shifts seem to be spread out over a period of almost thirty to forty years, in effect the migration was taking place in the course of a fairly concentrated time span and perhaps, in spurts. Migration was, therefore, neither continuous in that sense, nor uniform. In 1902 the Lower Chenab Colony Report noted that the previous years census report was quite out of date and ventured to hazard a guess that "if another census were to be taken, the population would probably be close to a million instead of under eight lakhs."[83] Similarly, the 1902-03 report pointed out that a large

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81. Census, Punjab, Report, 1921, p.138.

82. Census, Punjab, Report, 1931, p.118.

83. Punjab Colonies Report, 1901-02, p.11.

number of villages with populations of 300-400 in 1901, "now contain upwards of 1,000 souls."[84] In Shahpur the population registered a sharp increase from 73,734 to 161,806 between the years 1906 and 1911, an increase of about 219 per cent.[85]

Caste Composition of Colony Immigrants

The Census information on migration is nut just confined to the districts from which migration was taking place, it goes on to further elaborate on the caste and occupational background of those migrating to the Canal Colonies. The reports from 1901-1921 record that the migrants came from no less than twenty castes, while their listed occupation varied from owners and dependents to coolies, cart-owners, shopkeepers and even beggars. While the references to and, definitions of, occupational background in these census are difficult to accept and do not in any case prove anything very substantial, the caste origin figures may be interpreted to reveal certain general trends. The two census reports and tables in this instance point towards the fact that the largest caste based group migration to the Colony districts from the rest of the Province was represented by the Jats,

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84. Punjab Colonies Report, 1902-03, p.10.

85. Punjab Colonies Report, 1910-11, p.13.

described by Ibbetson as, "the most important of the Punjab peoples", in every respect.[86] In 1911 and 1921 the Jat immigrants comprised over 22 per cent and 23 per cent of total immigrants respectively. Among the Jats also, the single largest section was drawn from the Muslim Jats, who alone accounted for about 14 per cent to 15 per cent of the total immigrants between 1901 and 1921. The Muslim Jat, it may be pointed out, was definitely no counterpart of the superior land owning Sikh Jat of Central Punjab. In fact Ibbetson himself observed that:

> on the lower Indus the word Jat is applied generically to a congeries of tribes, Jats proper, Rajputs, lower castes and mongrels, who have no points in common save their Mahomedan religion and subordinate position.[87]

Ibbetson was at the same time emphatic in stating that while certain general characteristics may be noted, it was:

> impossible to make any statement whatever regarding any one of the castes we have to deal with, absolutely true as it may be - as regards one part of the Province which shall not presently be contradicted with equal truth as regards the same people in some other district.[88]

This observation needs to be kept in mind while making any statement about the other castes as well.

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86. Ibbeston, Denzil, Punjab Castes; reprint, Cosmo Publications, Delhi, 1981, ed., p. 102.

87. Ibid., p. 103.

88. Ibid., p. 1

But in general one aspect which may also be noted is that while the tribes and castes listed as returning their religion as Hindu, occupied a better social standing, those listed as 'Musalmans' inevitably seemed to be enjoying an inferior status. Thus, Arains and Kambohs were seen as being very close to one another in terms of origin and characteristics, in fact in districts such as Montgomery the Arain was seen as a Muslim counterpart of the Kamboh, yet while the Kamboh generally had a fairly high social standing, the Arain was held in "very low repute".[89] The Arains, who like the Kambohs, were known to be very fine cultivators, were described as Bāghbāns or market-gardeners, while the latter were known to follow other occupations as well. Among the immigrants, the Arains came second after the Jats, approximating 9 per cent and 12 per cent of total immigrants during the first and second decades respectively.

The next largest group of migrants were the Chuhras, described by Ibbetson as part of the "vagrant, menial and artisan castes."[90] Rose, however, described them as sweepers or scavengers and found them to represent the outcast par excellence. But Rose also drew attention to the fact that while Chuhras were originally tanners,

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89. Ibid., p. 194.

90. Ibid.

"nowadays their work is farm service. They are landless day-labourers on the farm."[91] Rose in fact treated the Chuhras as a core group comprising of labourers who specialised in different occupations and split into sub-castes which came to acquire their own identity. Thus while Sikh converts among Chuhras came to be known as Mazbis, those who converted to Islam were Mussalis; in addition to these, Chuhras who performed the task of domestic sweepers were Mihtar, weavers were Meghs, executioners were called Jallads, tanners were Khatiks, while swinebreeders among them were known as Halis. While Ibbetson classified Chuhras as a mix between artisans and menials, in Rose's categorisation Chuhras would be more likely to be classified as menials rather than artisans.

Of the other caste groups listed in Table 1.17, apart from Aroras and Rajputs, the rest, whether Hindu or Muslim, represented the menial groups, with only the Julahas being described as an "important artisan class," although branded as the "most turbulent".[92] Changars, "exceedingly industrious" were Muslims who were "largely employed in agriculture, particularly as reapers."[93]

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91. Rose, H.A., 1883, All references here are to 1970 reprint, edition, Vol.2, p.209.

92. Ibid., p.413.

93. Ibid., p.153.

Table: 1.17

MIGRATION BY CASTES

Casted	1911	%	1921	%
Jat Total	1,68,644	22.48	1,60,683	23.13
Jat Muslim	1,11,338	14.82	1,01,291	14.58
Jat Sikh	54,385	7.25.	57,227	8.23
Jat Hindu	2,921	0.39	2,165	0.31
Arain	52,526	7.00	81,974	11.80
Arora	17,727	2, 36	16,121	2.32
Rajput	14,177	1.89	15,526	2,23
Chamar	25.268	3.35	35,450	5.10
Chuhra	44,020	5.86	34,751	5.00
Jhimar	3,727	0.49	4.267	0.61
Kamboh	11,580	1.54	13.753	1.98
Mochhi	9,914	1.32	6,116	0.88
Tarkhan	9,028	1.20	6,816	0.98
Teli	1,092	0.14	4,360	0.62
Changar	-	-	7,865	1.13
Barwala	-	-	2,186	0.31
Julaha	6,140	0.81	8,449	1.21
Lohar	2,845	0.37	2,700	0.38
Machhi	-	-	4,600	0.66
Batwal	-	-	1,922	0.27
Dhobi	-	-	1,051	0.15
Kumhar	6,379	0.85	3,734	0.53
Mirasi	2,705	0.36	2,963	0.42
Nai	-	-	1,411	0.20
Musalli	16,030	2.13	16,394	2.36
Kharral	-	-	1,367	0.19
Mahtam	-	-	6,963	1.00
Total for decade	7,49,920		6,94,509	

Source: Census, Punjab 1911, Tables,
Census, Punjab 1921, Tables.

Note: All castes not included in table

Changar women were often employed by grain dealers for sifting and cleaning grain. The Chamar, a Hindu counterpart of the Mochhi though originally a tanner or leather worker was also a general coolie and field labourer.[94] The Kumhars, also known as the Ghumars, although originally potters, had taken to cultivation. They alone of all the castes in Punjab, kept donkeys and carried grain within the village, and often outside the village also on payment.[95] Mirasis who were originally village bards had also taken to cultivation as tenants-at-will.[96]

What emerges from this discussion then is that of the immigrant groups, if we exclude the Jats, the Aroras, Rajputs and Arains, the rest all represented menial, artisan or poor peasant landless labourers. Some of these were perhaps drawn to the Canal Colonies by the promise of land on the menials' squares. But all were obviously not lucky enough to get these. Nor, perhaps, did all Muslim Jats migrate in a capacity of landowners, as will be obvious when we discuss the allotment policy in Chapter II. To sum up this part of the discussion we may note that while Sikh and Hindu Jats as well as some of the Muslim Jats migrated to the Canal Colonies on a promise of land held out to them by Government, the

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94. Ibid., p. 147.

95. Ibid., p. 562.

96. Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 105.

Aroras perhaps pursued them in the hope of extending their money lending operations, almost all the rest moved in the hope of finding better opportunities as either labourers or perhaps even tenant-cultivators.

Section IV: Two Aspects of the Ecological Impact of Colonisation

"Desert into Garden"

While this stream of migration continued, the officials began their work of defending and lauding government's agrarian policy and, specifically Colonisation. The thrust of this was to draw attention to the fact that sometime in the 1890s, the magic wand of Pax Brittanica and irrigation technology promoted by government, cast a spell on this insecure, rainless, arid and semi-arid tract. The result, we are led to believe, was truly spectacular. For, "canal irrigation has changed the desert into a garden" said the Gujranwala district gazetteer.[97] Writing about Multan, Darling argued that Khanewal "is a young canal colony... and there is nothing more prosperous than this."[98] It was as if with the advent of the Canal Colonies and concomitant development of communications, "light had dawned and progress begun."[99]

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97. D.G. Gujranwala, op.cit., p.2.

98. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.110.

99. Ibid.

Awal Sāín sachche nún Sārán
Ik qissa nawān aj jorān
Bār agge lut khādi chorān
Harn, gidar, chuhehān dīān ghorān
Sunsān jungle koi nahi rāhā
Young Sāhib diya mulk wasā

(First I will praise the true Lord, I will tell a new tale today. How of old the Bār was the prey of thieves, The shelter of deer, jackals and rats. Now no barren jungle is left, Young Sahib has peopled the land).[100]

The sentiments expressed in the stanza quoted above were to be echoed time and again in the writings of the British officers in Punjab.

Darling himself wrote many years later:

> In the great Canal Colonies... we feel everywhere the beneficient hand of man. In the former (older districts), life is the immemorial life of India, primitive, isolated and fatalistic; in the latter, it is the new life brought in by Pax Brittanica, prosperous, progressive and modern.[101]

In the following decades the Canal Colonies came to be projected as representative of a model agricultural community allowing for the use of Punjab Province

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100. From a Punjabi ballad of 43 stanzas sung by a blind poet, kana when Captain Popham Young was leaving the Colony in 1899. Chenab Colony Gazetteer, op.cit., p.34.

101. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.111.

as a counterpoint to belie the nationalist critique of Imperial policy and its concomitant, Indian impoverishment. While millions were still reeling under the effect of one of the worst famines in the history of British India, when "the area over which intense and severe distress prevailed in the famine of 1896-97 were greater than in any previous famines..."[102] Voelcker claimed that in the Punjab, "it is unlikely that famine relief will ever be required in the future..."[103]

In 1900, in the face of a fresh wave of famine and scarcity conditions all over the country, when, "the most distinctive feature of the recent famine from the administrative point of view was the numbers of persons who came on for State relief. These far exceeded the numbers of any previous famine..." In Punjab relief needed declined as compared to the previous period 1896-97: a decline of 53 per cent in terms of number of people in affected tract and, of 119 per cent in units relieved.[104]

The tenor of the imperialists' argument was consistent and clear. For a backward country like India,

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102. I.F.C., Report, 1898, p.234.

103. Voelcker, Memorandum on the Moral and Material Progress in the Punjab, 1901-12.

104. I.F.C., Report, 1901, p.4.

the establishment of British rule in India promised a ray of hope. As opposed to the nationalists' bonded, distressed peasantry of colonial India, the government projected the image of the 'prosperous' Punjab peasant. In the Census Report for Punjab, 1921, it was claimed that:

> No disastrous famine has occurred since 1868, scarcity conditions in recent years have never produced famine; the agricultural conditions which prevailed in 1920-21 were such as would have led to severe famine fifty years before...[105]

Lest any doubts persisted regarding the factors contributing to this prosperity even in adverse circumstances, the entire gamut of official British writing was quick to dispel them. The Royal Commission on Agriculture emphasised that the first factor which changed conditions in Indian agriculture "was the establishment of peace within the country and of security on its borders," and warned against undermining the importance of this achievement.[106]

In Punjab itself, nowhere was the benevolent hand of the British empire as prominent as in the "Great Canal Colonies which thirty years ago were a desert and are now one of the granaries of the world," and which stood in

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105. Census, Punjab, Report, 1921, p.4.

106. R.C.A., Report, 1927, p.8.

sharp contrast with the "arid tracts of Hissar and the historic country around Delhi".[107] The imagination and enterprise of the British engineers and bureaucrats who conceived of the project were highlighted and it was reiterated that, but for them, the face of western Punjab would have been totally different:

> It is only the Canals fed by the Jhelum, the Chenab and the Ravi that have prevented the four flourishing districts of Shahpur, Lyallpur, Jhang and Montgomery being almost a desert. In the 60s, 89 per cent of Shahpur was waste, and thirty-five years ago, Lyallpur did not exist... The prosperity of Montgomery is even more recent. Ten years ago it was a country of rolling sand dunes patched with grass and of hard unfruitful plains, glistening with salt...[108]

Thus while critics of the government lay the blame for famine, scarcity, pauperisation and debt bondage at the door of government, the government refuted these by arguing that its policies were not adversely affecting agriculture; they were rather, contributing to its extension and development. While criticism mounted, Calvert reiterated that in Punjab.

> Irrigation was not designed to assist agriculture and diminish the losses from seasonal vagaries, but to create it where before it did not exist. Scattered about were old wells and in odd depressions where rain collected a little precarious cultivation had been possible, but there is little exaggeration in describing this great central and South West area as mainly desert prior to the advent of the great Chenab, Jhelum, Bari Doab and Triple Canal Projects.[109]

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107. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.24.

108. Ibid., p.112.

109. Calvert, 1922, op.cit., p.123.

Negative Aspects:

Water Logging

However, the picture being projected by the Government was not consistent at another level with its own reports. The sphere in which the negative aspects of irrigation were soon to be witnessed was that very sphere where the results had been spectacular, viz., the relationship between ecology and land use. The Gujranwala district gazetteer drew attention to the fact that "waterlogging assumed dangerous proportions between 1908 and 1916."[110] Of Sheikhupura, it was stated that "most of the land in the district is irrigated by the Upper Chenab Canal and the Lower Chenab Canal. On account of seepage from the canal a vast tract of land near Chichoki-Malian is waterlogged and is unfit for cultivation."[111] In Toba Tek Singh tahsil the assessment report sought to allay the fears of zamindars on the bogey of waterlogging by arguing that the "disease is a very remote possibility here", but at the same time conceded that the rise in sub-soil water in the Bār was "greater than elsewhere".[112] The assessment reports of Lyallpur and Samundri tahsils similarly noted that though waterlogging posed no danger, the water table

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110. D.G.Gujranwala, p.4.

111. Soils and Agriculture in the Punjab, 1927, p.9.

112. A.R., Toba Tek Singh, Lyallpur district, 1937, p.7.

was steadily rising.[113] In Gugera Branch Circle II there was a marked deterioration of soil, and since the land was not so high as in Gugera Branch Circle I, the water level was nearer to the surface and waterlogging posed a real threat to agriculture.[114]

The report on Soils and Agriculture in the Punjab, minced no words when stating that, "on account of the construction of the big canal systems and the consequent seepage, or sometimes an interruption in natural drainage, water has accumulated in the upper soil layers to such an extent that some of the soils are going out of cultivation on account of waterlogging."[115] This was contrary to the situation in Jullundur, where the water level was falling due to heavy demand on the wells.

Deposing before the Commission itself, many officers had drawn attention to the problem of waterlogging, and had suggested measures to improve the situation. Col.L.J.H. Grey, Superintendent, argued that "canal water should be given so sparingly as to drive the people to use the wells they have and to sink others. Not only would the water thus go much further, but we should hear less of water-logging and malaria..."[116] Wilson thought along the same

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113. A.R. Lyallpur, 1936, p.7 and A.R. Samundri, 1936, p.9.

114. A.R. Gugera Branch Circle II, 1912, p.7.

115. Soils and Agriculture in the Punjab, op.cit., p.3.

116. I.I.C.

lines: "where the rainfall is good or the underground water level sufficienty near the surface to make irrigation from wells practicable, canal water in the winter season should be gradually refused."[117]

This in fact was contrary to the process described in the settlement Reports that the introduction of perennial irrigation into a village was followed by the dismantling of all commanded wells which were previously at work. In Gujranwala district the number of wells not being used had gone up from 1,289 at previous settlement to 2,672 by 1928. While the number of wells in use had declined from 11,819 to 10,575 in the same period.[118] In Sheikhpura district between 1913 and 1924 the number of wells came down from 6,096 to 5,313 while that of wells not in use went up from 1,277 in the same period.[119]

Further even in areas where the number of wells did not decrease the area of crops watered by well irrigation came down in Jhang, Montgomery, Lahore, Gujranwala and Shahpur, by the beginning of the twentieth century.

The districts most affected by waterlogging were Gujranwala, Shahpur, Gujrat, Jhang, Lyallpur and

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117. Ibid.

118. Waterlogging Notes, Punjab, Part III, Vol. I, 1928, p.8.

119. Ibid., p.71.

Sheikhupura. In the Lower Chenab Colony, started in 1892, by 1908 the subsoil water level had risen to within ten feet of the surface. The heavy rainfall that year compounded the problem for it could not be absorbed in the already wet soil, it was not needed for irrigation and it found the outlet to the main river was blocked, because of the bunds and other obstructions. As a result certain areas remained wet until past the time for wheat cultivation and throughout the following winter. Further, the proximity of spring level led to the formation of alkali salts on the surface.

At a conference in 1926, the Extra Assistant Commissioner in charge of settlement operations in Gujranwala district, noted that roughly 40,000 acres in the district had been thrown out of cultivation due to waterlogging. Of this, 24,000 acres in Hafizabad tahsil alone were affected.[120] The District Commissioner, Jhang, stated that in the year 1908-09 waterlogging percolation (called sem or soma) had assumed formidable dimensions.[121]

While on the one hand the problem became more widespread, Government relief was slow to come. Severe cases such as that of Badarali and Jat Gujar villages in Gujranwala were well known to the authorities, yet the

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120. Ibid., p.3.

121. Ibid.

officers were slow to take decisions. Some of these villages were so badly affected that, "only a scrap of Jat Gujar is now cultivated, and that by occupancy tenants who fear they may otherwise lose their rights."[122] While parts of the village were totally submerged, here and in Daulatwala, "malaria always prevails".[123]

In 1922 the Land Revenue Administration Report stated that "the evil of waterlogging continues to spread on the Upper Chenab and Upper Jhelum Canals... The remedial measures hitherto adopted of cutting off irrigation on the one hand and on the other of intersecting the affected areas by surface drains and discharging them into one or other of the natural drainages has resulted in some improvement on the Upper Jhelum Canal, but on the Upper Chenab Canal its working is hampered by the obstructions put into the nallāhs by zamindars in order to secure flow irrigation during autumn..."[124] While on the Upper Chenab Canal Rs.61,000 were paid during the year for damage done by waterlogging, proposals for reducing swamp area in the Hafizabad tahsil of Gujranwala, on the Lower Chenab Canal, by extending and clearing drains were being considered; along with proposals for restricting irrigation on some distributaries as a precaution against

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122. Ibid., p.305.

123. Ibid.

124. LRARP, 1922, pp.18-19.

swamping. However, the report noted that the Financial Commissioners were not hopeful that the methods adopted will prove a 'universal panacea'. It was feared that the closing of distributaries, while slightly reducing the water-level may aggravate the efflorescence of saltpetre and general deterioration of the soil. "A waterproof lining of the main canal would appear to be the ideal solution, could satisfactory material be found."[125] Meanwhile complaints reaching the government were enquired into by the Drainage Board Engineer and Irrigation Department. As if to justify the dithering, it was stated that "some time must necessarily elapse before a decision as to the liability of Government on the one hand and the relief which should be afforded on the other can be reached."[126]

Various steps were suggested for dealing with the problem of rising water-level. Thus Sidney Preston, Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government of Punjab, was strongly in favour of the "restriction of irrigation in tracts which irrigate a very high percentage of the cultivable commanded area, or in which the spring level is high..."[127] He, therefore, argued that "where the rainfall is good or the underground water level sufficiently

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125. LRARP, 1922, pp. 18-19.

126. Waterlogging Notes, op.cit., p. 125. Senior Secretary to Financial Commissioner.

127. I.I.C. App., p. 23.

near the surface to make irrigation from wells practicable, canal water in the winter season should gradually be refused."[128] Concretely it was suggested that government should resort to a lengthening of the 'tātuls' or periods of total closure.

That this did not really offer a solution was brought out by the Jhang Settlement Report which noted the following effect of withdrawing cold weather supply of water: "From October to the end of March... the reduction in the water-level in the river is very marked. The effect of this is that the moisture is drained out of the soil more quickly than before. Many wells which, owing to the assistance derived from percolation, used to ripen large areas, have now to rely on their efforts alone, and a smaller area is harvested; while sailāb lands, on which previously unirrigated crop could be obtained with fair certainty, must now be protected by a well. Thus additional wells are required, both, to keep under chāhi cultivation land previously irrigated, for which the existing wells no longer suffice and, to ripen crops which previously required no such assistance."[129]

The problem seems to have been two-fold. On the one hand cultivation was affected by the adverse impact

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128. Ibid.

129. S.R. Jhang, 1906, op.cit., p.5.

of canal irrigation itself; on the other they suffered through the diversion of natural river and irrigation resources available to them prior to Colonisation. As early as the 1890s Lt.Col.Montgomery, Settlement Commissioner, Punjab, observed that:

> concurrently with a great increase in the irrigation done by the Bari Doāb Canal there was a large diminution of cultivation on the banks of the Ravi in the Montgomery district. It is a question for careful enquiry. If the cropped area in the Ravi Bet does not rise again in years of good floods it will be an indication that the contention of the people that the canal is responsible for the result has some truth in it. I do not say that this would be an argument for doing less irrigation from the canal, for the more certain cultivation from a canal is more beneficial to the country generally than the uncertain husbandry of sailāb lands. But it would be reason for the grant of compensation in some form to the dwellers on the river who depend for their livelihood on their sailāb crops.[130]

The Multan Settlement Report recorded that "the Ravi for the greater part of most winters is no longer a river, all the spare water is diverted into the Bārī Doāb Canal, and the bed of Ravi in this district can be crossed dry foot most of the cold weather. So far as sailāb cultivation is concerned, however, the state of the river in the winter is a matter of small moment."[131]

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130. S.R. Montgomery, 1892-99, op.cit., p.4.

131. S.R. Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.1

Again in 1914, before undertaking assessment operations for Montgomery and Gugera tahsils of Montgomery district, officials reported that while it was calculated that the Lower Bāri Doāb Canal would completely revolutionise conditions in the Ganji Bār and part of the Bet, "the landowners of villages situated on the Rabi are generally in a very depressed condition partly owing to the diminution of inundations and partly due to immigration of the surplus population to the Chenab Colony..."[132]

In his evidence before the Irrigation Commission, Wilson conceded that "it is a common complaint that land which has been cultivated for some time with the aid of canal irrigation deteriorates in productive power and there is some truth in the assertion but I believe it is greatly exaggerated... the only remedy for the deterioration is the more frequent use of manure which is generally becoming more common."[133]

Discussing the problem, the Royal Commission on Agriculture suggested that perhaps a sunken range of rocks was a factor influencing the water-table of the Punjab. That the root of the problem lay in Government policy was conceded when the Report noted that:

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132. Rev.Agri. Rev.; Sept 1914, A. Pro.4, File 404,, P 2588

133. I.I.C., App. p.41.

> the troubles which have arisen in the irrigated tracts of India due to waterlogging and the formation of alkali lands have been due to failure properly to correlate a new irrigation system with the natural drainage of the tract. We have no doubt that the lesson has been learnt and that, where there is not already the practice, a careful drainage survey which should include estimates for drainage construction will, in future, form an integral part of all new irrigation projects.[134]

The census of 1931 noted that a considerable area in Sheikhupura, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Gujrat districts had been thrown out of cultivation due to waterlogging and further, that:

> As a result of remedial measures adopted by the Irrigation Department, a portion of the waterlogged area has been reclaimed during the last few years. These measures consist of drains, dug to carry off the seepage water, closure of canals for prolonged periods and the running of canals low as far as possible. The sem area, by which is meant the land submerged under water or rendered unculturable owing to the great rise in sub-soil water, has benefitted by these measures. For the reclamation of the thoor striken area, rendered unfit for cultivation owing to the salts in the soil having been forced up by the rise in sub-soil water a cure has been found but it has yet to be seen whether it would be economical.[135]

The matter which continued to pose serious problems was finally referred to a Waterlogging Board set up for this purpose, with the Financial Commissioner, Revenue, as its President.

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134. R.C.A. Report, p.353.

135. Census, Punjab, Report, 1931, p.40.

The Report of the Irrigation Department noted in 1913-14 that "in the ardour to extend the benefit of irrigation over as wide an area as possible, the necessity of dealing promptly and vigourously with some of the evil results of over-irrigation has been to some extent overlooked... These are blots on an otherwise admirable system."[136]

Subsequently after investigations had been conducted by the Drainage Board and the recommendations of local authorities, government was compelled to take measures to alleviate the problem. On the Lower Chenab Canal, work on lining of channels was begun to limit loss by seepage. The PWD, Irrigation branch report for 1933-34 thus stated that between 1920-21 and 1933-34 a total of Rs.1,01,24,994 had been spent as part of anti-waterlogging expenditure. Of part of this the break-up was as follows:[137]

Lower Chenab Canal	Rs.20,15,303
Upper Chenab Canal	Rs.34,58,731
Lower Jhelum Canal	Rs.16,60,244
Lower Bari Doab Canal	Rs. 4,45,589

It was also decided to set a part of land in the Nili Bar Colony aside for compensatory grants to be

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136. P.W.D. Irrigation, Report 1913-14.

137. P.W.D. Irrigation, Report, 1933, p.63.

given to those whose land had been ruined by (a) water-logging, (b) cho or river action and change in sailāb conditions.

Whitcombe has discussed similar issues with relation to canal irrigation in the United Provinces. Over-cropping, salination, destruction of wells, percolation of main channels leading to creation of swamps, were some of the problems that cultivators faced in the United Provinces after extension of canal irrigation. And yet, as the points out, "the awe-inspiring size of the great canals obscured, to those minded to see in them a monument to engineering achievement and administrative virtue, their less direct repercussions and the faults in their construction."[138]

Impact on Older Cultivated Tracts

What is obvious from this is that while official reports highlight the promise Colony tracts held out for those from Central Punjab and the famine-stricken populace of eastern Punjab, they chose to gloss over the deterioration in economic status of the old inhabitants of this very region and the circumstances under which they had to abandon their previous cultivated and grazing lands. It was true that while:

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138. Whitcombe, 1971, p.85.

> the general prosperity of the country has been enormously enhanced and that many of the individuals who have emigrated from the river valleys to the canal-irrigated uplands have improved their condition. But they have in many cases only been driven to migrate by the gradual impoverishment of their villages, due entirely to the action of the state; and those of them who have clung to their old homes have seen their prosperity wane, while their more fortunate fellows on the perennial canals have waxed fat...[139]

What Wilson, Settlement Commissioner noted about the impact of Colonisation on cultivated land in the region, Tobetson noted with respect to the forest areas in Punjab, which had "greatly reduced of late owing to the spread of cultivation."[140] Enormous areas which were allotted for cultivation, were originally part of the Rakhs, "which are now rapidly disappearing," and which till then offered, "extensive grazing grounds and supply a considerable amount of fuel and small building wood. Their yield in either respect is very moderate per acre, but their great extent gives them importance in the internal economy of the province."[141]

In the early years itself, it was clear to many who were fully associated with the governmental machinery that the success of the Colonisation scheme was largely

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139. Report on Canal Projects Estimate, 1904, Note by Wilson, Settlement Commissioner, p.11 (R.C.P.E.)

140. Punjab Forest Report, 1896-97, p.1. From Iboestson, Secretary to GOI, DRA to Rev. Secretary, GOP.

141. Ibid.

"at the expense of the inhabitants of the river valleys, where the population of the South West Punjab was formerly concentrated."[142] The abstraction of a large proportion of the water from the rivers on which they were dependent, affected injuriously the working of the inundation canals, the spread of the river floods and the level of their wells, thereby directly impairing the means of irrigation available to them. A few lamented the state of the inundation canals and government's reluctance to spend any money for clearing these since the income derived from them was insubstantial as compared to that from the perennial canals. As, by degrees, the water of the Punjab rivers was diverted to the Doāb uplands, many questioned the wisdom of allowing cultivation in the river valleys to be abandoned and the justification in treating the river side population so shabbily.

Thorburn, Financial Commissioner, emphasised that the success of Colonisation "will not justify the government in applying purely business principles to the development of the Jhelum and Indus Canals."[143] Pointing to the dangers inherent in sacrificing local Mohamedan interests for large and quick returns, he narrated the plight of the early settlers:

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142. RCPE, op.cit., p.148.

143. Thorburn, 1886, p.283.

> As the canal penetrated southwards, converting waste into cornfields, the Musalman tribes on either bank in its vicinity - the hereditary possessors of the country - were not only denied participation in the abundance flowing by their doors, but were required to stay at home, cultivate their now profitless wells and rainlands, and pay their fixed revenue assessments. The instinct of self-preservation, however, proved stronger than the fiats of the government and soon, for a depth of thirty miles on either side of the canal irrigated country, wells were abandoned by the hundreds and a large part of the rural population migrated to the canal villages, working there as farm labourers, artisans and menials.[144]

It is not our purpose here to erect one stereotype against another by exclusively emphasising these negative aspects of canal construction as opposed to the positive ones stressed in the mainstream of bureaucratic thinking and its propagandist projection. We only wish to emphasise the complexity of the processes set in motion by the new irrigation technology and the far-reaching ramifications of the social and economic impact of the Canal Colony Schemes.

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144. Ibid.

APPENDIX I

Colony Tahsils	District
1. Lower Chenab Colony:	
- Hafizabad	Gujranwala
- Khangah Dogran	Sheikhupura
- Sharakpur	Sheikhupura
- Lyallpur	Lyallpur
- Samundari	Lyallpur
- Toba Tek Singh	Lyallpur
- Jaranwala	Lyallpur
- Jhang	Jhang
- Chiniot	Jhang
2. Lower Jehlum Colony:	
- Shahpur	Shahpur
- Bhalwal	Shahpur
- Sargodha	Shahpur
3. Upper Bari Doab Colony:	
- Montgomery	Montgomery
- Okara	Montgomery
- Mailsi	Multan
- Khanewal	Multan
4. Chunian Colony:	
- Chunian	Lahore

Note: Based on Census, Punjab, Part III, 1921, p.53.

Chapter II

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CANAL COLONY SCHEME

British effort in canal irrigation in the Canal Colonies began in 1882. In this chapter we examine the process leading to the transformation of a modest irrigation plan into the vast Colonisation Scheme introduced in 1892. To what extent was the fate of the Colonisation programme linked to policy changes in irrigation finance? We also look at the basis on which allotments were made; the initial schemes, the conditional grants, service grants, how the first allotment fared and made way for newer priorities as the years went by? Further, we examine the outcome of allotment policy in terms of what class of people procured land, and whether one can discern any pattern as far as specific castes or communities were concerned? Lastly, we examine the outcome of Colonisation in the context of the rights of the peasants. We address ourselves to only two aspects of this complex question, aspects primarily affected by the irrigation scheme: what were the grazing rights? What were the rights granted to allottees on the Canals?

The years covered by this study, saw the emergence of Punjab as an 'Irrigation Province', in British India. We have already seen in the previous chapter that inundation canals developed under the previous rulers of

Punjab, as well as individual initiative of some chieftains, contributed significantly to the development of agricultural activity in an otherwise semi-nomadic pastoral economy. As in the case of the British, they too had realised the vast potential of irrigation in an otherwise arid, rainless tract. This process was developed further by the British, when, soon after annexation, surveys were launched to assess the potential irrigability of the vast tracts commanded by the rivers of the Indus system.

Nevertheless, the development of irrigation in Punjab should not be seen as unimpeded linear progress, undertaken at the behest of an imperial government. For, irrigation policy in Punjab was a part of the policy adopted by the British all over India, and was, therefore, subject to all the shifts, and vicissitudes resulting from changes in both, the specific policy of irrigation finance and the wider context of Public Works in India. This is important since the development of the vast canal schemes of the Punjab henceforth upheld as proof of the sincerest philanthropic efforts were proceeded on with the minutest financial calculations on the part of government. The intricate exercise of arriving at these financial prognostications proceeded at many different levels of State Policy, and covered a vast ground between

the 1850s when the annexation of Punjab took place, and the 1920s when the major part of work on the Triple Canal Project in Punjab was accomplished.

Section I - Irrigation Finances

We shall not here, go into the details of irrigation finance in general, but will only make note of some of the more significant decisions with regard to it, and further examine how this policy manifest itself with reference to the Canal Colonies.[1]

Before we go into the specifics of irrigation development in the Punjab, it may be useful to note that as early as 1858, irrigation works were divided, from the official viewpoint into two categories: (1) State Works; (2) Works of Internal Improvement. While the former were to be constructed and maintained even if non-remunerative by government as part of its acknowledged duties, the latter were a strictly commercial propostion; with the decision to undertake construction being dependent on the profitability of the scheme. It was clearly laid down that if it could not be reasonably predicted that the scheme would be profitable, it was not to be undertaken.[2]

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1. For a fuller discussion on this issue, cf. Stone, Ian, 1984 and Whitecombe, E, Irrigation, in CEHI, 1982, Vol.2.

2. cf. Whitecombe, op.cit., pp.692-93.

In subsequent phases of irrigation policy, this primary distinction, between works treated as incumbent upon the State, and those undertaken with a view to profit, remained in some form or the other.

In the period 1858-66, the spread of irrigation was through private companies with stipulations to ensure government control over investments and a substantial share of the profits. In the 1860s, after considerable rethinking on the issue, it was decided that the State undertake all irrigation works it could manage and, where necessary, raise funds through public loans. The stricture here was that works undertaken after raising public loans had to be remunerative. By 1882-83 it was further laid down that expenditure on these, 'productive' works be restricted to those projects which were expected to yield sufficient revenue to pay working expenses together with a 4 per cent interest on outlay ten years after completion. In 1919, irrigation was turned over to local governments, but even so the greater part of government expenditure on irrigation went to major and minor works, while agricultural departments were permitted slightly increased allocations for small-scale irrigation.[3]

The basis of State policy were clearly laid out in the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898, Pointing

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3. Ibid.

out that the irrigation branch of the Public Works was a commercial department, it stated that even:

> improvements of the existing systems of irrigation works would not be recommended by the irrigation officers unless, they were desirable improvements which though not in themselves remunerative must sooner or later be undertaken as a charge against the system, and as an essential part of the project.[4]

Lest the motives of the government appear to be too capricious, it was added that:

> ...the irrigation department is no doubt concerned to show as high a return as possible on its protective and minor irrigation works, but the primary justification for grants under these heads is not that the works under them will prove directly remunerative, but that they will strengthen the agricultural community and mitigate distress in future.[5]

This had, in fact been clarified in the Government of India Resolution when setting up the Irrigation Commission, wherein it was stated that "greater importance may often be attached to the extent and reliability of the protection that will be afforded than to the merits of the schemes regarded as financial investment."[6] It was at the same time conceded that irrigation works hitherto constructed by the state in India on the whole proved directly remunerative."[7] The classification subsequently adopted by the Commission was a division

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4. I.F.C., 1898, Report, p.243.
5. Ibid.
6. Rev. Agri. Famine, September 1901, A.Pro. 25, F 61, p.2501.
7. Ibid.

of irrigation works into two groups: (a) productive works, or major works, constructed wholly or mainly from loan funds and (b) minor works, the cost of which was charged against general revenues. Sometime after the establishment of the famine fund an intermediate class, "protective works", was also introduced. This was the outcome of a decision that a portion of the amount credited annually to the famine fund should, when not required for purposes of famine relief, be devoted to the construction of protective railways and irrigation works; The cost of protective works was also ultimately met from general revenues which in any case financed minor works.[8]

The Beginnings

The first concrete proposals for construction of canals in the Punjab - only inundation Canals, to begin with - were put forward by Sir Charles Aitchison, in 1882. Of the canals proposed, two were to take off from the Chenab and one each from the Sutlej and the Ravi. While the Chenab Canals were to cover land in Gujranwala and Jhang districts, the Sutlej was to pave the way for the Lower Sohag Para Scheme in Montgomery, while the fourth was to take off from the Sidhnai reach in Multan.[9]

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8. IIC, Vol. 1, p. 74.

9. Ibid., p. 18.

While these proposals were more in the nature of faltering steps, they proved to be the harbingers of a scheme more grandiose than any British India had seen in the sphere of public works.

The Lower Chenab Canal, then, got off the ground as a test case in this background. On its success rested the future of similar schemes in the Sind Sagar and Jach doabs, and in the Bar tracts between the Sutlej and Ravi in the Multan and Montgomery districts. These were by any standards, very modest beginnings. But a number of factors combined to transform these into the vast Colonisation Scheme that covered almost a quarter of a century of the history of rural Punjab.

Firstly, the extensive and ambitious projects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were made possible by the tremendous advances in science and know-how regarding canal irrigation. Secondly, conditions in Western Punjab were found exceptionally suitable for the effective utilization of surface waters, for, the shows and glaciers of the Himalayas provided storage on a scale that man could not rival and the alluvial plains rendered construction of large canals very economical. The Commission, noted that despite such favourable conditions only 9 per cent of the total rainfall and 30 per cent of the surface flow was retained for purposes of artificial irrigation and calculated that "notwithstanding

the enormous areas already irrigated in this catchment, amounting, if well-irrigation be included, to 18 million acreas, it will be possible to make very large extensions of irrigation by utilizing a portion of the present surplus drainage.

The prevalence of famine conditions at the end of the twentieth century and the drafting of labour for relief works on an unprecedented scale also weighed heavily in favour of extension of projects for protection against famines. Fenton, Revenue Secretary to the Punjab Government, deposing before the Famine Commission 1898, supported irrigation projects on the ground that "by irrigating unirrigated land the produce will be increased in a far greater proportion than is likely to result from the application of scientific manures or the introduction of new staples..."[10] While the proposed canals were not to be located in directly famine affected areas he pushed the argument that the effects of agricultural failure and scarcity in an insecure tract could be mitigated by the introduction of irrigation in surrounding tracts:

> although the Chenab Canal and the Jhelum Canal, when constructed, will not carry protection to existing insecure areas, the cultivation being, in both cases almost entirely new cultivation in waste lands previously uncultivated, yet all such projects have a very high degree of protective value and tracts like the Phalia tahsil of

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10. I.F.C., 1898, Evidence, Punjab, p.57.

> Gujrat and the Sharakpur tahsil of Lahore, when the Gugera Branch of the Chenab Canal and the Jhelum Canal have been constructed will, though outside the area commanded by these schemes, probably never again require to be made the scene of famine relief work.[11]

But above all, the decision to go ahead with the irrigation works in Punjab was based on financial claculations. This is obvious from the fact that in Punjab, the increase in irrigated area took place largely under the head of major or productive works. Table 2.1 shows that between 1887 and 1888 and 1917 and 1918, while acreage covered by Major Works went up from 1,422,775 to 7,986,388 viz., an increase of 461.13 per cent, the corresponding increase in area under Minor Works was from 918,328 acres to 1,077,513 acres or only 17.3 per cent. The latter represented only 2.3 per cent of total increase in irrigated area. (See Table 2.1).

Doing Good with Profit

It may be recalled that the Irrigation Commission had maintained that an irrigation work was to be classed as productive and sanctioned against loan funds when it had been shown to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State that it was likely to fulfil the conditions of a productive public work, i.e., "to yield a net revenue, ten years after completion, sufficient to cover interest

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11. Rev. Agri. Famine, April 1 98, A.Pro.30-37, F.39,

Table: 2.1 ✓

Year	AREA IRRIGATED , IN ACRES		Total
	Punjab-Canals Major Works	Punjab Canals Minor Works	
1887-1888	1422775	918328	2341103
1888-1889	1719957	997428	2747385
1889-1890	1863456	994710	2858166
1890-1891	2033500	982956	3016456
1891-1892	2144392	1019154	3193546
1892-1893	1847892	1079709	2927591
1893-1894	1903654	958664	2862318
1894-1895	1855858	1063296	2919154
1895-1896	2852383	939200	3791583
1896-1897	3649308	960110	4609413
1897-1898	4053289	1158360	5211619
1898-1899	3872501	984264	4856765
1899-1900	4381972	859522	5244494
1900-1901	4642852	1357699	6000551
1901-1902	4491838	981521	5473359
1902-1903	4864274	815690	5679964
1903-1904	5610787	779547	6390334
1904-1905	5689132	617252	6306384
1905-1906	6163396	751067	6914436
1906-1907	5902995	803317	6706312
1907-1908	5515386	524558	6039944
1908-1909	6385050	968096	7353146
1909-1910	6117004	969607	7086611
1910-1911	6270757	956285	7227042
1911-1912	7469645	862247	8331892
1912-1913	7461251	968139	8429381
1913-1914	7351721	971743	8323464
1914-1915	7883628	1079413	8963041
1915-1916	7982532	902279	8884811
1916-1917	8493867	1085957	9579824
1917-1918	7986388	1077513	9063901

Source: Administration Report, PWD, Irrigation Branch Punjab 1918-19.

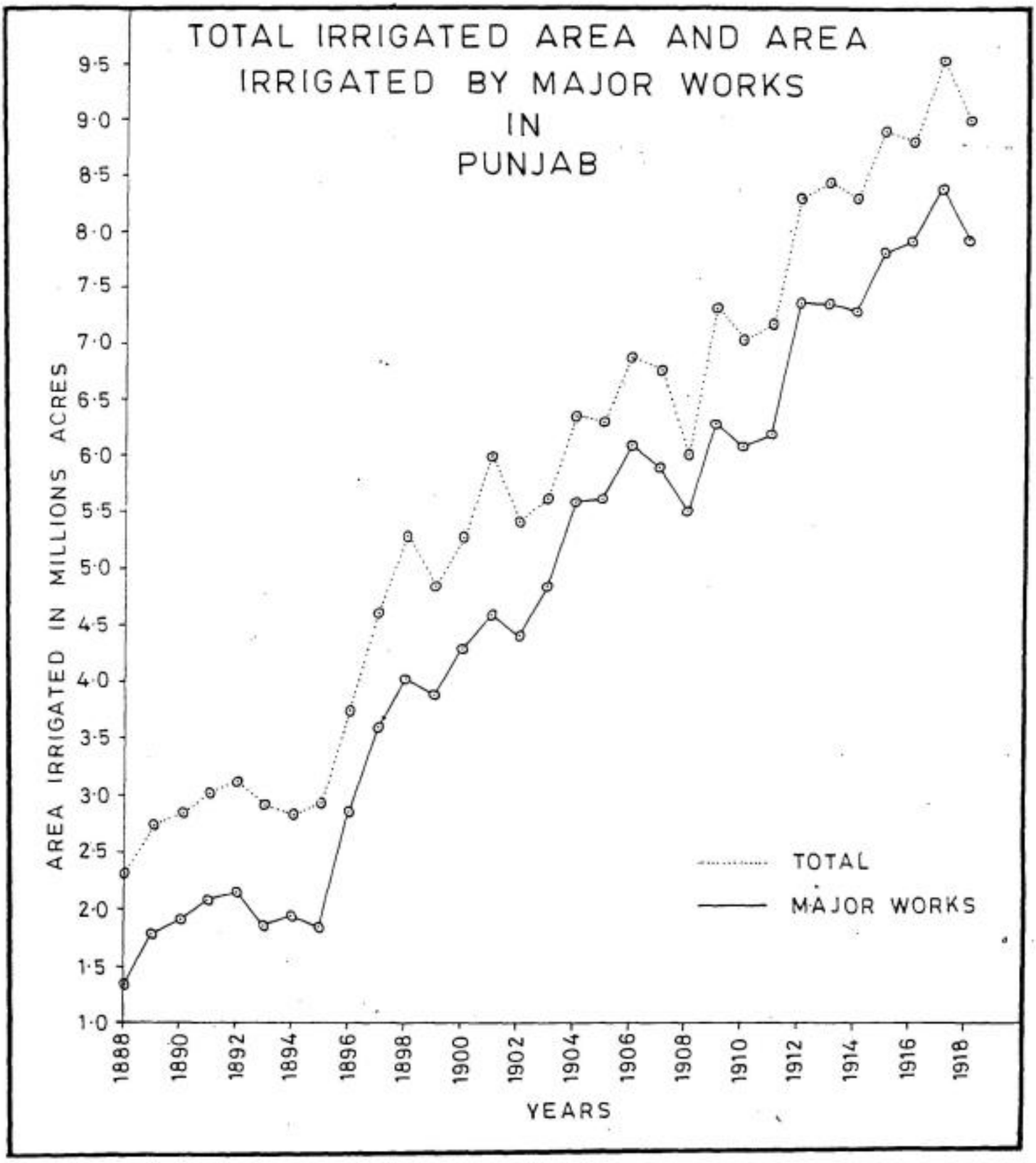

TOTAL IRRIGATED AREA AND AREA IRRIGATED BY MAJOR WORKS IN PUNJAB
AREA IRRIGATED IN MILLIONS ACRES
9·5
9·0
8·5
8·0
7·5
7·0
6·5
6·0
5·5
5·0
4·5
4·0
3·5
3·0
2·5
2·0
1·5
1·0
1888
1890
1892
1894
1896
1898
1900
1902
1904
1906
1908
1910
1912
1914
1916
1918
YEARS
TOTAL
MAJOR WORKS

Fig.1

charges on the sum-at-charge at that date."[12] By sum-at-charge was meant the total direct and indirect capital cost, plus the excess if any, of interest charges to date over net revenue. In the case of the Punjab Canals, the first cost and any subsequent expenditure on extensions and improvements were met from borrowed capital, while the charges for interest, maintenance and repairs were provided out of current revenues; to which income derived from these works was credited. The works were expected to yield, ten years after completion, sufficient revenues to pay working expenses and an annual interest calculated at 4 per cent on the capital invested.[13]

The annual returns from the Lower Chenab Canal, were, in sheer statistical terms, remarkable and left no doubt as to the soundness of the propostion on financial grounds. Nor do they leave any scope for doubt as to what the considerations were when major decisions regarding extension of irrigation schemes were taken (see Table 2.2).

The Irrigation Commission itself commented that:

> there is no Province in which, taken as a whole, the direct profits of irrigation works, as expressed in the returns realized on their capital cost have been so high, or, in which new protective works can be proposed with the same confidence in their remunerativeness as financial investments.[14]

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12. I.I.C., Vol.1, op.cit., p.74.
13. Thompson, 1925, p.118.
14. I.I.C., Vol.2, p.1.

Table - 2.2

Financial Account of Canals 1887-1888 to 1917-1918

Year	Capital out-lay, Direct and Indirect to end of year	Interest charges to end of year	Net revenue to end of year	Accumulated profits to end of year	FOR THE YEAR			
					Gross revenue	Working expense	Net revenue	Percentage of capital
	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs
1887-1888	57625823	31846764	50935631	19088867	4005923	1701248	2304675	3.99
1888-1889	58948409	34074458	53327638	19253180	4364994	1972987	2392007	4.00
1889-1890	60098478	86349808	56180320	19830512	4966797	2114115	2852682	4.74
1890-1891	62471861	38693767	59887074	21143307	5830440	2173686	3656754	5.85
1891-1892	67091026	41174523	63626126	22451603	6040990	2251938	3789052	5.65
1892-1893	69792824	43798997	67983641	24284647	68091 9	2451631	4357518	6.24
1893-1894	73489876	46548772	70889491	44340719	5350907	2445060	2905847	3.95
1894-1895	76495573	49429432	74204493	24775061	5965551	2650549	8315002	4.83
1895-1896	80257067	52441565	78776591	26335026	7098251	2840474	4257780	5.31
1896-1897	84100265	55601216	86634033	31032817	10944448	3087005	7857443	9.84
1897-1898	87019865	58892163	95636226	36744063	12188419	31 6227	9002192	10.35
1898-1899	89216631	62282641	104491814	42269173	12407093	3551505	8855588	9.93
1899-1900	90947216	65749487	113777761	48028274	13414661	4128714	9285944	10.21
1900-1901	92075977	69270350	124093246	54821887	14616136	4301651	10314485	11.20
1901-1902	80441638	69930552	131508916	61578364	14635198	4326919	10308279	11.52
1902-1903	103461088	75336849	144526777	69189928	16614594	4822673	11791921	11.39
1903-1904	106907947	80336374	158278899	77942525	18573691	5718671	12855020	12.02
1904-1905	108788346	84456907	171651245	87194338	19610593	6238247	13372346	12.29
1905-1906	110151719	88636692	183747798	95111106	18336568	6590266	11746302	10.66
1906-1907	111116550	92304047	197951811	105647764	22175797	6978097	15197700	13.68
1907-1908	112883171	95981870	211052103	115070233	20279699	7179407	13100292	11.64
1908-1909	112802325	99657325	224880401	125223076	21160012	7271714	13828298	12.26
1909-1910	113318778	103319741	239361134	196041393	22399978	7919245	14480733	12.78
1910-1911	114331721	107028093	254975785	147947692	23416492	7802291	15614651	13.66
1911-1912	116222814	110811169	273729766	162918599	27410441	8356458	18753983	16.18
1912-1913	146299761	118674357	297841160	179166812	32793330	8681929	24111401	16.48
1913-1914	167787610	125350785	328769670	198418885	34789517	8811016	25928501	15.45
1914-1915	171713716	131106084	849007666	217901582	34502445	9324449	25237996	14.70
1915-1916	216951484	144061281	372665954	228604673	31589804	10931516	23658288	10.90
1916-1917	220616193	151065128	401327395	250262267	39631912	10970471	28661441	12.99
1917-1918	223305164	158549520	428026809	269477289	37803265	11103851	26699414	11.95

Source: Administration Report, P.W.D. Irrigation Branch, Punjab, 1918-19.

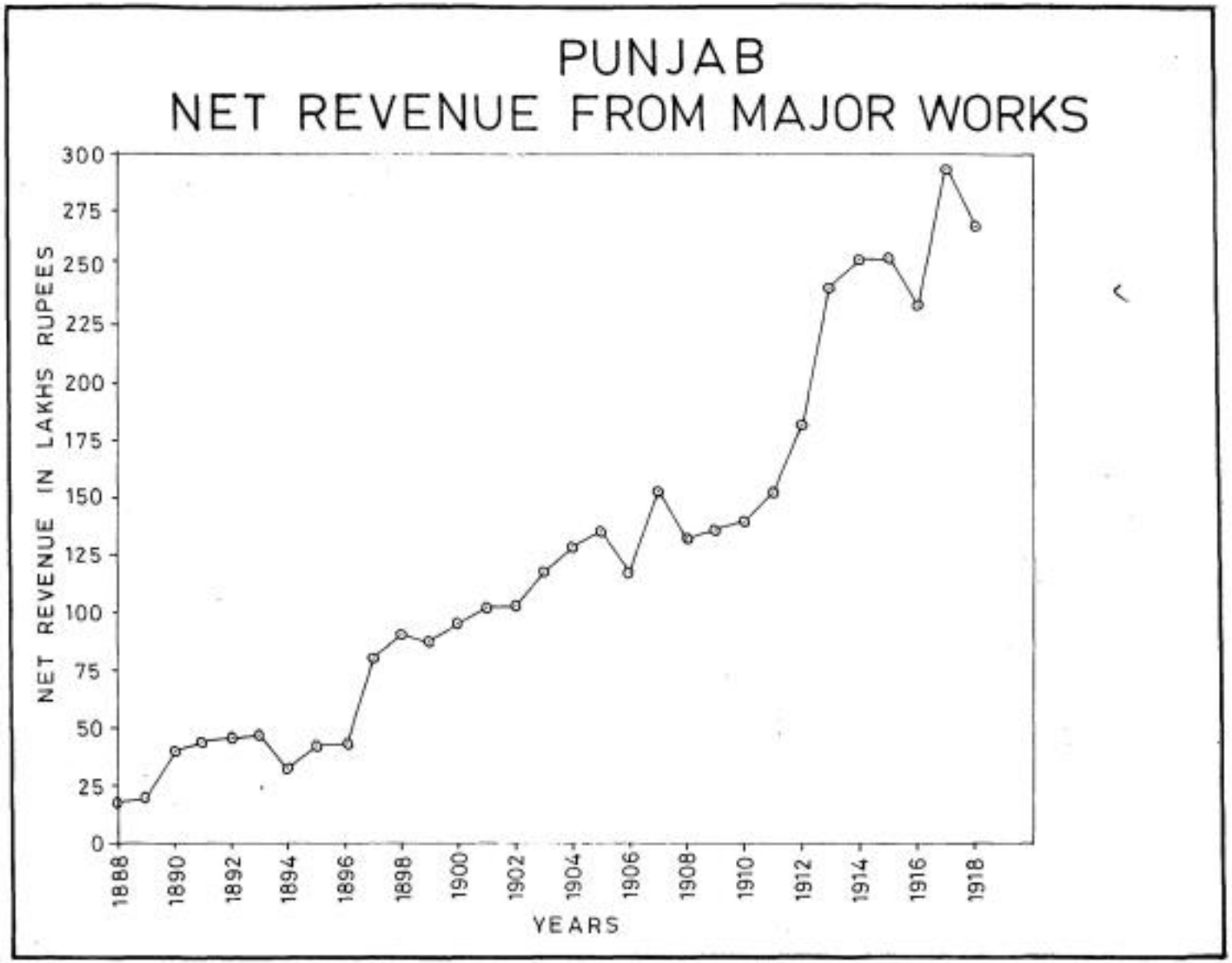

PUNJAB
NET REVENUE FROM MAJOR WORKS
NET REVENUE IN LAKHS RUPEES
300
275
250
225
200
175
150
125
100
75
50
25
0
1888
1890
1892
1894
1896
1898
1900
1902
1904
1906
1908
1910
1912
1914
1916
1918
YEARS

Fig. 2

Meanwhile Thorburn estimated that up to 1904, the total cost of Punjab canals, exclusive of the share contributed by native states, had been "under seven million sterling, and the annual net return on that outlay now averages 11 per cent and in another decade may rise to 18 per cent..."[15]

As Table 2.2 shows, in 1890 itself, the annual net revenue return from Major works alone had crossed the 25 lakh rupee mark; by 1901, it was above one crore rupees, and by 1915 the annual return was over 25 crores rupees. The accumulated profits, again from Major works, stood at 2.1 crore rupees in 1890, soared to 4.8 in 1900, reached 13.6 crore rupees in 1910 and were approximately 27 crore rupees in 1918. Meanwhile the average net revenue percentage never fell below 10 per cent after 1900.

These were Provincial averages. If we study the statements of accounts for the Lower Chenab Canal, and to an extent even the Lower Jhelum Canal, they prove to be much higher.

The Lower Chenab Canal, opened in 1887 as an inundation Canal, began to function as a perennial canal only in 1892. By 1906, it had reimbursed the whole

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15. Thorburn, 1904, op.cit., p.275.

capital outlay and interest; the Lower Jhelum Canal, started in 1901, had reimbursed all capital outlay out of its earnings by 1917. (See Tables 2.3 to 2.5). The financial returns on the Lower Chenab Canal remained the most remarkable, to the last. They appear more so, when we recall the refusal by GOI in 1875, to sanction a proposal for the Canal because its financial prospects dependent on Colonisation of the tract, seemed unattractive.[16]

The importance of the irrigation schemes to Punjab finances can be estimated from its revenue receipts. Right through the 1920s and up to 1936, receipts from irrigation measured between 35 per cent and 43 per cent of total revenue receipts (see Table 2.6). The profits to the State on its investment, continued unabated even during the depression, flasifying the most modest of forecasts and ensuring to it, a stability of revenue that surpassed all expectations. Here it may be pointed out that even after independence and the formation of West Pakistan, the newly formed country made annual payments from its meagre resources to Great Britain, as payment for the irrigation system and the railways. These payments exceeded 55 million rupees per annum - 40 million for repayment of the principal and 15 million as interest on the debt - adversely affected the economy of Pakistan.[1]

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16. Stone, 1984, op.cit., p.24.

17. Gankovsky and Gordon, Polonskaya, 19 , p.102.

Table 2.3

Financial Record of the Productive Irrigation Canals of the Punjab 1926-27

	Rupees
Total capital outlay to end of 1926-27	29,15,48,419
Total Accumulated surplus revenues	58,27,01,089
Total Area Irrigated and Assessed to Water Rates	1,04,66,574
Revenue Assessed during the year:	
Occupier's rates	3,82,85,620
Plantation	1,19,822
Water Power	3,24,927
Irrigation	1,91,611
Miscellaneous	10,79,746
Total Direct Assessed Receipts	4,00,01,726
Indirect Receipts	1,92,37,637
Grand Total assessed Receipts	5,92,39,363
Working Expenses for the year	1,73,16,353
Net Assessed Revenue Receipts for the year	4,19,23,010
Percentage earned on total capital outlay (in 1926-27)	1438%

(This percentage of earnings to capital investment would be considerably greater had not the Rs.6,07,75,273 capital outlay of the incomplete Sutlej Valley Project been included in the total capital outlay).

Source: Irrigation Report, Punjab, 1926-27 Part II, p.9.

Table: 2.4

FINANCIAL RECORD OF THE LOWER CHENAB CANAL IN 1926-27

	Rupees
Total Area Irrigated & Assessed to Water Rates	25,62,136
Revenue Assessed during the year:	
Occupier's Rates	1,17,59,871
Plantation Assessed Receipts	19,028
Water Power	27,257
Navigation	-
Miscellaneous	1,30,340
Total Direct Assessed Receipts	1,19,36,496
Indirect Receipts	1,16,74,094
Grand Total Assessed Receipts	2,36,10,590
Working Expenses for the year	31,58,982
Net Assessed Revenue	2,04,51,608
% earned on capital outlay	56.95%

Note: By 1899 all arrears of interest on capital had been paid out of earnings.

- By 1906 the whole capital Rs. 3,59,14,603 was reimbursed out of earnings.
- By 1927 the accumulated surplus revenue account for this canal stood at Rs. 27,62,64,925.

Canal opened as an inundation Canal in 1887, completed as a perennial canal in 1892.

Source: Irrigation Report, Punjab, 1926-27, Part-II, p.10

Table: 2.5

FINANCIAL RECORD OF THE LOWER JHELUM CANAL IN 1926-27

	Rupees
Total Area Irrigated & Assessed to water rates	34,96,445
Revenue Assessed During the year:	
Occupier's rates	34,96,445
Plantation Assessed Receipts	2,581
Water Power	38,798
Navigation	-
Miscellaneous	37,162
Total Direct Assessed Receipts	35,74,986
Indirect Receipts	22,55,181
Grand Total Assessed Receipts	58,30,167
Working Expenses for the year	14,76,459
Net Assessed Revenue for the year	43,53,708
% earned on capital out-lay	22.89%
Total Cap.Outlay	1,90,17,322

Note: for 5 years no irrigation revenues accrued due to government policy of encouraging development of the tract Irr.

- By 1917 the entire capital outlay had been reimbursed out of earnings.
- By 1927 the accumulated surplus revenues were Rs. 4,82,67,990.

Canal opened for irrigation service in 1901, completed in its present scope in 1917.

Source: Irrigation Report, Punjab, 1926-27, Part-II, p.11

Table: 2.6

TOTAL REVENUE RECEIPTS OF THE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT & NET RECEIPTS FROM IRRIGATION, 1921-22 to 1935-36

Years	Total Revenue Receipts	Receipts from Irrigation	Col.3 as % of Col.2
1921-22	86518	33278	38
1922-23	94347	36377	39
1923-34	102150	39211	38
1924-25	108580	43002	40
1925-26	113857	45708	40
1926-27	108674	37979	35
1927-28	109032	40827	37
1928-29	104344	37439	36
1929-30	105392	39380	37
1930-31	100969	36159	36
1931-32	96074	38083	40
1932-33	98663	36788	37
1933-34	103802	44221	43
1934-35	104986	40176	38
1935-36	102394	39896	39

Source: BEIP, 52, 1937, p.14

Section II - The Allotment Policy

The beginning of perennial irrigation in these previously sparsely populated tracts of Punjab opened up totally new vistas for state intervention. The Colonisation process, which government now embarked upon, was a unique exercise. For, here the various officials got the opportunity to translate their ideas regarding planned development. To begin with, it was decided to keep the Colony lands, as distinct administrative units for some years to come. These were placed under a Colony administration and Colonisation officers. These governed all aspects of life in the Colonies and enjoyed vast powers which ultimately affected even the daily lives of Colonists. Thus those Colonists wishing to return to the old districts had to take permission - to be exempted from the condition of residence; those building structures on allotted land also needed official approval;most had to abide by specific norms regarding house-building, sanitation, planting of trees and so on; the kamin's squares provided for a certain number of and a set of artisans - menials which the state felt were necessary for providing services to the village; these were, therefore, allotted land on the squares set aside for them, while others had to on the one hand fend for themselves, and on the other, even pay up kiraya teh zamini for even the right to live

on Colony lands. Thus the powers of the state, as manifest in the authority of its officers, were extensive and all-pervasive. While this in itself was ominous, as far as intervention in the daily lives of the inhabitants was concerned what was more significant was that Colonisation and allotment provided to government an opportunity to determine who was to reside in the Colonies, and on what terms. The elaborate scheme of grants as it evolved over the next decade or so was an unprecedented illustration of how colonial rule offered to the state the opportunity to even, at times, select the people it wanted to reside in closely monitored regions, as well as to subsequently watch their social and political behaviour. It offers an excellent example of how the state intervened, consciously, in the class structure in a region, though to generalise from this for other regions, or even for the whole of Punjab would be terribly misleading.

Allotments in the region were along specifically laid down guidelines. The measure of allotment was a square which on the Chenab Canal was approximately 28 acres, while on others ranged between 25 and 28 acres.

The three major categories of allotments being the capitalist yeomen and peasant grantees. Of these the capitalist grant area ordinarily ranged from six to twenty squares, i.e., approximately 160 to 600 acres. The

nazrānā payable on the land was as many rupees per acre as the number of integral squares in the grant, subject to a minimum of Rs.10 per acres. A fixed sum of six annas per acre was charged for the wood on the estates. After a lapse of five years, capitalists could acquire proprietory rights on fulfilment of other conditions and payment of a price inclusive of nazrānā. The purchase money could be paid either in a lump sum or in five instalments over a period of five years. In such cases interest was to be charged at the rate of 6¼ per cent but the assessment of mālikānā was remitted after the payment of the first instalment.[18]

The yeomen were entitled to grants of two to five squares i.e., fifty-five to one hundred and sixty acres approximately and a nazrānā of rupees six per acre was leviable, half of it payable before the commencement of the tenancy and the rest within the next five years. At the end of the period the yeoman was permitted to purchase proprietory rights by paying a sum equal to ten times the amount of the owners' rate that is, land revenue and mālikānā taken together, provided the conditions of allotment had been fulfilled. Yeoman grantees comprised those who without attaining to the ranks of the richer gentry, were still well above the ordinary peasantry. They were recruited from good zamindar families, with

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18. C.C.G., 1904, p.133.

considerable ancestral holdings in the old districts, "a class rich in credit and resource and including men of undoubted intelligence and enterprise."[19]

The third category was that of peasant grantees. These comprised of three groups - immigrants, nomads and the Hithāri. While the first were invariably drawn from the more congested districts of Central Punjab, the last were hereditary landowners from the Hithār , viz., the Chenab and Ravi riverain, who had suffered through the construction of the canal by loss of sailāb, tenants and grazing grounds.[20]

In addition to these three categories of grantees, land allotments were made to auction purchases who secured lands for which they had bid with success in open competition. The objects of these auctions was threefold: (a) more speedy return of capital expenditure, (b) to provide an opening for non-agriculturists and (c) to help arrive at an indication of the value of Colony land in the market. These lands were free of all conditions which were appended to non-capitalist grants, but allottees could not ask for an exchange of lands.[21]

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19. C.S.R., 1915, p.5

20. Ibid.

21. PCM, 1933, op.cit., p.107.

On the Jhelum Canal, the differences based on capitalist, yeoman and peasant grants were scrapped. Since most grants in the Lower Jhelum Colony were on horse-breeding terms, two categories were evolved: (a) the sufedposh which was the term used for every grantee of more than two squares amongst horse-breeders and more than three squares among the rest; (b) for those allotted up to two squares of land the term used was ābādkār.[22] In the early years Raīs class grants, the equivalent of capitalists on the Lower Chenab Canal were also given. These included large grants for stud farms and other such operations.

Special Grantees

The Colonisation scheme had apparently got off the ground with philanthropic intent. Dobson, Settlement Officer for the Chenab Colony described it as being conceived of "in a spirit of singular breadth and magnanimity".[23] The professed objective was to select Colonists without regard to vested interests and government asserted that "the relief of pressure in congested districts was made the keystone of government policy; but it was coupled with a determination to introduce only practised agriculturists of approved antecedents and to found in so far as

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22. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1, Ans.File, p.51.

23. C.S.R., op.cit., p.3.

it might be, none but healthy rural communities of the best type."[24]

However, in the early stage of Colonisation itself, the professed philanthropic objective appeared to be at cross-purposes with the choice of Colonists made. Noting the emphasis laid on 'good Colonists' the Financial Commissioner argued that, "some endeavour should be made to extend the benefit to as many classes of the community as require relief and are capable of making good use of the advantage;" excepting the civil grants which were not meant to heal distress, "effort should first be made to relieve those who need relief, not to add prosperity to prosperity, " he pointed out.[25] He too admitted that in all probability peasant colonists would be mainly drawn from amongst the landowners and occupancy tenants, even though he did not think that tenants-at-will had to be excluded as such.

The professed motive of securing agriculture in the province through Canal irrigation and Colonisation was increasingly overshadowed by the desire to settle the Colonies with an eye to ensuring security and stability of the Empire. Over the years, land allotments in the Colonies came to represent a solution to the many, varied needs of imperialism, linked directly

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24. Ibid.

25. Rev.Agri.Rev., Sept.1901, A.Pro.11-14, F.188.

or indirectly, to the factor of political stability. The range of such allotment proved to be truly baffling - stretching from grants for camel-breeding on the Lower Chenab Canal, horse and mule-breeding grants on the Lower Jhelum Canal, special grants for cattle farming; for promotion of cultivation of American Cotton in Montgomery to special Civil and Military Reward Grants on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal. These were clearly a departure from the professed policy of making allotments to settlers from congested districts. But then, as the Chenab Settlement Officer pointed out, even the decision to bring in Colonists from congested districts, stemmed from a desire to "stabilise the country", and was an advance on the primary objective of providing security of agriculture to the existing population.[26]

While official preference was clearly in favour of Colonists from Central Punjab districts, over the years contingencies arose which necessitated a temporary shift in this policy.

Thus in 1897 the Biloch tribals on the Bar, who had earlier been deprived of their vast grazing grounds surprisingly received support from strange quarters: the Report of the Transport Committee noted that the Colonisation process was destroying the camel-grazing tracts which produced the camels best-fitted for trans-

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26. C.S.R., op.cit., pp.6-7.

frontier campaigning purposes. Strengthening the Biloches' claim to preferential allotments, on the Jhang and Gugera branches of the Lower Chenab Colony, the writers of the report argued that the introduction of camel service conditions in 'peasant' and even 'yeoman' grants would ensure "fit camels and sarwans for employment on any trans-frontier emergency."[27]

The first proposal for grants on service conditions was made by the Assistant Colonisation Officer, Khan Bahadur Aurangzeb Khan in 1898: He recommended that "a grant of one square of land be made to an approved camel-owner registering three camels and also the name of an attendant; that the service grantees receive permits to graze camels without payment of any fees anywhere in the unappropriated Government waste lying between the Ravi and Chenab rivers; three squares of land on 'peasant' terms was to be made over to certain leading men to be called chaudhris who might or might not be appointed lambardārs also on the special conditions that they make themselves responsible for the collection of a certain number of camels and attendants, for reporting all deaths/sickness amongst registered camels or attendants and for themselves

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27. Rev. Agri. Irrigation, April 1898, Pro. 8, File 1, A.

supplying deficiencies should any registered camels or attendants fail to appear when called upon."[28]

However, the temporary favour shown to the Biloches does not seem to have yielded good results. While at least 80,000 acres were allotted to camel grantees on the Lower Chenab Canal alone, by 1905 itself some officials had realised that "the making of camel grants was a mistake". Douie admitted to the Canal Colonies Committee that, "the only plan under which camel grants could, I think, be successful, would be, if they were made on a fringe of a colony adjoining a large area of camel grazing land which it was not proposed to colonise".[29]

Reacting to this state of affairs, A.S. Keese, Officer Investigating Camel Diseases in the Civil Veterinary Department, stated what should have been obvious in the first instance: that camel grants should not have been given on irrigated lands, "We know that dry areas are healthy to camels and moist areas generally speaking unhealthy."[30]

The Camel grantees continued to be poor, resenting the conditional grants till, finally, in 1921, it

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28. P.C.M., 1933, op.cit., p.124.

29. Rev.Agri.Rev., April, 1909 Pro.1-4, Evidence File A, p.553.

30. Ibid., p.657.

was decided to disband the Camel Corps and commute service conditions, with the tenants being allowed to purchase proprietary rights.[31]

Horse and Mule-Breeding Grants

Meanwhile, in the early 1900s, when the problems with camel grants had already become visible, the Mule-Breeding Commission mooted the idea of allotments on mule-breeding conditions. The Army Department conceded that, "the importance of the project from an imperial as well as from an Indian Army point of view, is fully recognised. Each year greater difficulty is being experienced by every country that maintains a standing army in obtaining riding horses, and in India it is becoming increasingly difficult to import this class of horses... In these circumstances the Government of India attach considerable importance to the introduction of as large a horse and mule-breeding scheme as possible in the Lower Bari Doāb Colony quite independently of, and in addition to that in operation in the Jhelum Canal Colony."[32]

The Commission observed that with the new Jhelum Canal, the Punjab government "will have an area of 540,000 acres of culturable land available for distribution to colonists in the districts of Shahpur and Jhang.

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31. P.C.M., 1933, op.cit., p. 124.

32. Ibid.

The Commission is strongly of the opinion that the whole of the area, with the possible exception of land already promised to individuals in return for past services, should be distributed to colonists on condition of their keeping mares for breeding either horses or mules..."[33]

Consequent upon this decision, the grantees on the Lower Jhelum Canal were to be confined to members of those castes and professions with a hereditary taste for, or practical experience of horses and mules. Conditions on these grants were also more stringent. In the event of sale of any mare the grantee was required on penalty of forfeiting his grant to provide another one in its place within a certain fixed period. Succession to such conditional grants was also regulated and confined to a single heir.

While the conditional grants were not easily acceptable to the grantees, resistance to these came from a section of the officials also. The latter, however, soon came around to the opinion that, "it appeared wise to recognise that the ordinary objects of Colonisation must be subordinated to the horse-breeding experiment."[34] The reasons for this shift were

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33. Report of the Horse and Mule-Breeding Commission, 1903 Pt. IX, pp.58-59.

34. P.C.M., 1907, op.cit., p.63.

not far to seek. The Commissioner, Rawalpindi, in his evidence before the Canal Colonies Committee stated: "I believe that the reserve of horses provided by the Jhelum Colony is considered as a very valuable asset in the military sense."[35] Between 1905 and 1911 the Jhelum Colony alone was meeting on an average, 71 per cent of the army's purchase demand of horses.[36]

What the government was beginning to feel pleased about, the large part of grantees resented; for the existence of horse-breeding conditions and the consequent withholding of the privilege of acquiring proprietary right from all the conditional grantees, placed the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony area permanently in a position of special tutelage.

Many in government were amenable to the idea of modifying the terms so that, "the peasant grant on service conditions be divided into two portions, one remaining on service conditions subject to the rule of primogeniture, and the other becoming personal to the grantee and developing by ordinary rules of inheritance and presumably becoming proprietary."[37] However, given the fact that the Army's interests were so closely tied

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35. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Evidence File, p.550.

36. P.C.M., 1926, op.cit., p.74.

37. Rev. Agri.Rev. April 1909, Pro.1-4, A Evidence File, p.550.

up with the matter, government did not budge at all, resulting in a series of agitations demanding abolition of horse-breeding conditions. In 1928 this assumed a serious form with the formation of a Zamindāra Ghoripāla Committee. The agitation, however, soon subsided, for with the onset of the depression it became evident that horse-breeding was the form of agricultural activity which had suffered the least in comparison to the others in the face of the collapse of prices.[38]

Cattle Farming

Camels, horses and mules apart, in 1904 government decided to set up at Sargodha, district Shahpur, bull-breeding and bull-rearing farms also.[39] On the Bari Doāb Canal, land was put aside for cattle farms. Five grantee cattle farms of a total area of about 15,300 acres were set up here, two for maintaining lands of pure-bred Montgomery Cattle and the remaining three for Hissar Cattle. Near Montgomery a grant of 485 acres was made to start a dairy farm. In addition to this, in Shergarh, Montgomery district, 223 grantees were given half to one rectangle of twelve-and-half

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38. PCR, Shahpur, 1927-28, p.30.

39. Rev.Agri., Genl., December 1904, Pro.4, F.24.

acres each in seven different villages for maintaining one cow of the Montgomery breed which was to meet the approval of the Civil Veterinary department.[40] However, it is surprising that for such a vast tract where security of agriculture was the professed priority, grants for dairy farming did not go much beyond this.

Reward Grants

While the above mentioned conditional grants reflect specific shifts in imperial needs over time, as far as the special reward grants were concerned, allotment policy represented a fair degree of consistency. The question of reward grants was discussed in the early stages of Colonisation; over the years the importance of these grants became ever more clear. The Reward grants consisted of two broad heads, viz., civil grants and military reward grants.

The purpose of these grants was never questioned - and it was, after all, no coincidence that among the first to receive reward grants were pensioners of the Mazhbi Sikh pioneer regiments, which had been raised at the time of the revolt of 1857.[41]

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40. Census, Punjab, Report, 1931, p.36.

41. C.S.R., op.cit., pp.6-7.

Soon after allotment work began on the Lower Chenab Canal, it was proposed that, "10,000 acres of land now available should be reserved for soldiers and that on each subsequent extension of the canal the Native army should be allowed to participate in the yeoman grants to the extent of one-sixth of the area set apart for this purpose".[42] Table 2.7 gives some figures for allotment on this count. What emerges from subsequent correspondence on this subject indicates there were no two opinions on the justification for such grants. In fact what was discussed related to the terms and criterion for allotment and the approximate size of such grants. On these points, there was some difference of opinion amongst the officials.

As far as the size of the military grants was concerned, general opinion emerged in favour of a certain amount of ambivalence. The Government of India Resolution, Military Department, stated that an order for a grant "must always be, so to speak, a mere leap in the dark, as the actual values of the grant will vary enormously according to the position and advantages of the locality in which it may be located..."[43] While

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42. Rev. Agri.Rev., February 1893, A.Pro.12-14, F.264 of 1892.

43. From Fanshawe, H.C., Jr.Secretary, GOP to Secretary, GOI, Rev.Agri.Rev.June 1890, Pro.75-78, F.22 H of 1889 and 43 A of 1890.

TABLE 2.7

ALLOTMENTS ON THE LOWER CHENAB CANAL UPTO 1904

	Category			Acres	Percentage on total allotment
1.	Old Proprietary			14,783	0.84
2.	Ordinary Capitalists			89,174	0.04
3.	Capitalists on Special Reward Terms			8,592	0.50
4.	Yeoman			1,42,406	8.05
5.	Stud Farms			7,874	0.45
6.	Mazhabis			11,713	0.66
7.	Peasants: Total			13,44,954	76.02
	a) Christians	7,874	0.45%		
	b) Immigrants	9,47,750	53.57%		
	c) Nomads	2,53,752	14.34%		
	d) Hitharis - Jhang	76,501	4.32%		
	e) Hitharis - Montgomery	47,997	2.71%		
	f) Hitharis - Multan	11,080	6.26%		
8.	Peasant Lambardars			32,130	1.82
9.	Camel Service Terms			79,633	4.50
10.	Camel Service Chaudhris			5,314	0.30
11.	Menials			32,658	1.85
	Total			17,69,231	

Source: Gazetteer, Chenab Colony, 1904, p.

an opinion was expressed that rather than make an actual promise of land, Government of India should merely hold out a recommendation, the Adjutant General in India pushed for land on yeoman conditions to be "reserved for award to deserving native soldiers, of not less than twenty years' service, who may be able to satisfy their commanding officers that they possess capital to the extent of Rupees twenty per acre applied for."[44]

The Adjutant-General's proposal for grant on yeoman conditions raised several questions. For, how far was it logical to give one or two squares on yeoman conditions, "especially when there will be peasant grantees holding equal land but on lesser rights in the same village? Why should smaller grants have the right of transfer, merely because they are military?"[45] But given the importance of the grants, the Punjab Government accepted the Adjutant General's proposal with a slight modification that all grants less than four square in extent would be made on peasant terms.[46] Even so the conditions on which these grants were made were inconsistent and anomalous vis-a-vis the other grants. Thus the successor of a military grantee, if himself a military employee, was exempt from the condition of

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44. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1893, A.Pro.12-14, F.264, of 1892.

45. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1893, A.Pro.3, F.123.

46. Ibid.

personal residence during the period of service, while similar exemption would not be granted in case of the successor being a civil employee. On the other hand, the successor of a grantee of another class was not entitled to exemption even if he were in military employment.[47]

In addition to military grants on yeoman conditions officers of the Indian army were at times granted land as jāgīr - up to an area of eight squares or, approximately 225 acres, being taken to be equivalent of a jāgīr of Rs.400 per annum. These were subject to capitalist grant conditions, but paid no nazrānā and were entitled to proprietory rights after five years, without any payment.[48]

The importance of military reward grants, never questioned in the first place, came to be realised even more as the years passed and politically, conditions worsened for the government.

In subsequent years the need for such allotments was more emphasised. Thus at the outbreak of the first World War, Noyce, Under Secretary to Government of India, D.R.A., wrote to the Revenue Secretary, Punjab:

> ...in recent Punjab Colonisation schemes, more especially in the scheme for the Colonisation of the area commanded by the Lower Bari Doab Canal, liberal provision has been made for grants to Military pensioners. The land available in the area commanded by the Upper Jhelum

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47. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Ans. File, p.51.

48. C.C.G., op.cit., p.134.

> Canal is very limited but as this will probably be the last occasion for some time on which it will be possible to set aside land for military grants, it seems very desirable that the present opportunity should be taken to make some additional provision for military pensioners. I am to suggest, therefore, that the Lieutenant-Governor might consider the importance of reserving for military pensioners on ordinary terms any surplus there may ultimately be in the areas set aside for preferential allotments, for compensatory and for horse-breeding grants.[49]

The Under Secretary's point was well-taken - by November 1914 the decision had been taken to increase land set aside for such grants and, "to reserve 75,000 acres of land on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal for the purpose of making reward grants on peasant conditions to those who may distinguish themselves in the present war." Previously the land earmarked for such grants on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal was 5,000 acres.[50]

Meanwhile, with the rising tide of the anti-imperialist movement it dawned upon government that there were immense possibilities of using even civil grants to ensure public support. The recipients of these grants were to be drawn from two social groups. Firstly, there were the proposed allotments to members of the landed gentry of the Province on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal. The second set of recipients were to be persons who had

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49. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1914, A.Pro.22, File 171 of 1914, p.1623.

50. Rev.Agri.Rev., November 1914, A.Pro.69, F.276, p.2869.

"distinguished themselves by rendering assistance to the Criminal Administration" (Sic!).[51] In 1915, Government of India was pleased to sanction 15,000 acres on the Upper Jhelum Canal and 5,000 acres on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal for grants in lieu of such service. Correspondence related to these grants indicates that while sanctioning these proposals government had to resort to the balancing act in the face of lobbying by various officials for civil and military grantees. As a result of this perhaps, Government of India acceded to the request to scale down land set aside for civil reward grants from 20,000 acres to 15,000 acres.[52] Similar pressure to reduce land for civil grants on the Lower Bari Doāb was turned down since Government of India considered it 'inadvisable' to reduce the 'Criminal reward grants', i.e., grants given as reward for assisting in criminal administration, which had proved a "valuable incentive to the people of the more disturbed parts of the Province to assist the police in the prevention of crime and the arrest of offenders".[53]

Of the civil grants the first, to the landed gentry, served a purpose slightly different to the second. As O'Dwyer pointed out, the landed gentry as a class, was,

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51. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1915 A.Pro.27, F.173, p.915.

52. Ibid.

53. Rev.Agri.Rev., June 1918, A.Pro.1-3, F.134, p.663.

in comparison with others:

> declining in wealth and influence owing to various causes such as the recurring partitions in each generation of ancestral lands and in some cases even of jāgīrs the simultaneous rise of a prosperous middle class, and the growing wealth of the peasantry as a whole. But its members are still - and if properly handled should continue to be - an important political asset and, a great support to the district officer and to the administration generally in dealing with the rural classes. Little has been done for them in the various Colonisation schemes compared with what has been done and what it is proposed to do for the peasantry, and the present scheme offers one of the few opportunities still left for assisting them and strengthening their position.[54]

These grants, therefore, were to be used to help maintain the status quo, and to help prop up a class on the decline. The civil reward grants, also meant to serve a political purpose were different in that:

> The class whose services to the state the Lieutenant-Governor now desires to recognise by the bestowal of grants of land would ordinarily not possess the social status and influence enjoyed by the recipients of the new jāgīrs, but it does not necessarily follow that their services to government or to their community have been less valuable. In almost every district there are men of this stamp who have for years given loyal support and assistance to the officers of government, while since the commencement of the war many instances have come to the Lieutenant Governor's notice of excellent work in connection with recruitment for the Army, the maintenance of public order, and the suppression of the revolutionary movement, rendered by men who are ineligible for the grants of land reserved for members of the hereditary

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54. Financial Commissioner's (Revenue) Orders, No.425, Pro.24, Conf., year not mentioned.

> landed gentry and who cannot be included in the new jagir grants which are to be created annually. Their services nonetheless merit recognition and the bestowal of grants of land in a limited number of particularly deserving cases will, in His Honour's opinion, be widely appreciated and will encourage and stimulate the growing ideal of civic duty throughout the province.[55]

The civil grants were to be allotted by Head of Departments and the Commissioners of Division concerned. Initially, on the Jhelum Canal, the grants were of four types: (a) of over five squares, (b) four to five squares, subject to both nazrānā and the rule of primogeniture, (c) two to three squares, subject to nazrānā but not primogeniture and (d)one square grants subject to conditions similar to peasant grants. On these grants, residence was compulsory, unless special sanction was obtained for exemption and the grantees were, at the outset, classed as occupancy tenants, with no proprietory rights at all.[56] Subsequently, on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal, when land available was restricted, the grants were generally of between three to six squares. But the terms on which these were made were to be the same as for the landed gentry grants.[57] This restriction on size of grant, however, was not always adhered to.

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55. Rev.Agri.Rev.August 1917, A.Pro.24-25, File 86, pp.737-43.

56. P.C.R., Jhelum Colony, 1902-03, p.22.

57. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1917, A.Pro. 24-25, F.86, op.cit.

Thus, nine Tumandars of Dera Ghazi Khan received grants covering 3,625 acres or over 140 squares for, "the position of the Tumandars in the province is unique, their services as a body in maintaining order within a frontier district and along an exposed border of three hundred miles in length are invaluable."[58]

Pir Nur Ahmed of Shorkot Tahsil, Jhang district, was recommended for a grant of 125 acres on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal. Forwarding his claim at a time when the shrine the Pir presided over was threatened by river action, Craik wrote to the Secretary, Government of India, that the Pir had, "always used his influence on behalf of Government, and many of his followers, chiefly Awans and Tiwanas, are now serving in the army..."[59]

A similar grant of 250 acres was made in favour of Pir Ghulam Abbas, Pir of Makhad, in the Attock district. The Pir who had wide influence among the Pathans and was regarded with veneration by many of the frontier chiefs had an additional claim, for the influence he had among the Khattaks, who form such a strong and loyal element in the Indian Army was well-known to the Military authorities and had been cordially recognised by them. Recommending

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58. Rev. Agri. Rev., A. File 93 of 1917, p. 629 pro. 14 July 1917.

59. Rev. Agri. Rev., May 1918, A. Pro. 6, File 114 of 1918, p. 607.

the grant, Thompson, Revenue Secretary, wrote that it was "in essence a political grant. Though made to a religious leader, it was made to him for political services and with a political object".[60]

Some of the other grantees included Risaldar Teja Singh, resident of Lower Chenab Colony and a member of the Honorary Bench of Magistrates at Sangla. He obtained a title of Rai Sahib; a man of seventy years he showed keen enthusiasm "in the cause of recruitment and in the collection of war funds. The Chenab Colony area near Sangla has produced a very large number of recruits, and the main credit for this goes to Rai Sahib Teja Singh.[61] Quite similar was the case of Subedar Sher Singh, a well educated Jat Sikh who as Zaildar, Honorary Magistrate on the Sargodha bench and Director of a Central Co-operative Bank was of great 'assistance'

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60. Rev. Agri. Rev., October 1914, A. Pro. 36. File 324 of 1914, p. 2479. Kershaw, Secretary, D.R.A., GOI Sanctioning the grant wrote back to Craik; "all religious leaders must to some extent exercise political influence and the adoption of the policy now proposed involves the danger that religion may become too prominent and political influence somewhat overstated. Where there are rival religious influences, favour shown to one creed and sect may either force government to show equal favour to others or else cause as such discontent on the one side as it created dissatisfaction on the other..."

61. Rev. Agri. Rev. November 1918, A. Pro. 15, File 262 of 1918, p. 109.

to the administration in the Lower Jhelum Colony; "His influence and tact have been instrumental in inducing large number of the inhabitants of his zail to enlist in the Army, and he rendered especially valuable service in the way of advice and support to the police officers who were engaged in quelling the serious riots which occurred at Lak in the Shahpur district during February of this year."[62]

These are only a few instances. However, the records cite numerous such grants in lieu of services rendered. These included officials ex-officials, army officers, retired officers and so on.[63]

What is notable, at the same time, is the fact that despite most of these recipients already having given proof of their faithfulness, Government was not fully reassured and in 1916, while the war was still on, it was decided that:

> all future civil and military grants of land, jagirs, assignments of land revenue, special pensions and analogous continuing rewards for services rendered should be subject to a condition of loyal behaviour and active support of government officers in any time of trouble or disorder.[64]

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62. Ibid.

63. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1920, A.Pro.14, File 81 of 1920, p.317.

64. Rev.Agri.Rev., March 1918, A. Pro.7, F.237 of 1916, p.448.

This, it needs to be remembered, was in addition to the clause that had already been appended to the conditions of grant in 1913, viz, that if any occupancy tenant or landowner in the colony was "convicted of murder, dacoity or robbery or of abetment of any of these offences or is sentenced to imprisonment or transportation for a term of seven years or upwards, the collector may, with the previous sanction of the local government, resume such land on behalf of the Government."[65]

Section III - The Outcome of Allotment Policy

As a result of allotment policy as it evolved, a certain pattern can be traced by which land was distributed in the Colony tracts. Tables 2.7 to 2.11 show the main features of distribution among the different categories, as work proceeded on the different canals. On the Lower Chenab Canal, while the peasant category figures as the largest, amongst the peasant allottees, immigrant colonists comprised the single largest group. On the Lower Jhelum and Lower Bari Doāb Canals the 'peasants' were replaced by horse and mule-breeding grantees who occupied approximately 49 per cent and 56 per cent of the total land distributed. In the Nili Bar, auction purchasers formed the bulk of landowners, with military and reward grantees coming next.

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65. Rev.Agri.Rev., November 1913, A.Pro.6, File 423 of 1913, p.2437.

Table: 2.8

ALLOTMENTS ON THE LOWER JHELUM CANAL:

Categories	Acres	Percentage
To Horse-breeders (188,626 - abadkars, 22,279 - sufedposh)	2,10,905	48.50
Private Stud Farm Grantees	6,754	1.55
Govt Deptt. for remount Studs & Seed Farms	33,549	7.72
Aborigines/Janglis	59,816	13.76
Non Horse-breeders	60,126	13.83
Arboricultural operations	4,458	1.03
Town, villages, etc.,	11,440	2.63
Roads, Water-courses, Canals etc.	29,952	6.89
Menials	10,744	2.47
Lambardari	7,099	1.63
TOTAL	4,34,843	

Source: L.J.C. Gazetteer, 1920, and P.C.R., Shahpur, 1915-16.

TABLE 2.9

ALLOTMENTS ON THE LOWER BARI DOAB CANAL

	Category	Original Proposal	Final Scheme	Percentage of Col. 3 on Total area
		Acres	Acres	Acres
1.	Forests	40,000	30,970	3.50
2.	Auction	1,25,00	69,196	7.84
3.	For Regimental Farms and Special Agricultural Objectives	1,00,500	86,619	9.81
4.	Horse and Mule-breading Peasants	6,89,500	5,02,607	56.93
5.	Hereditary Agriculturists	70,000	81,749	10.74
6.	Compensatory Grants	40,000	21,919	2.20
7.	Depressed Classes	30,000	20,000	2.27
8.	Rewards and Reserve	22,000	10,000	1.13
9.	Landed Gentry Grants	75,000	59,852	6.78
	Total:	11,92,000	8,82,912	

Source : Rev. Agri. Rev. A, Pro. 18, F-309 of 1916.

As can be seen from the tables, the pattern that emerged in each Colony clearly reflected the shifts in official policy and the expectations that government had from different social groups and strata. The later distributions, to an extent, also reflected the assimilation of experience on the Lower Chenab Canal, the earliest to be started in the region. A clear illustration of this was the fate of the yeoman and capitalist grants, for instance, which forced government to admit that implementation of allotment policy had not met with 'unqualified success'. As early as 1895, the Chenab Colonisation Officer put up a note before the government of Punjab stating that he was, "strongly opposed to reserving any large area for these classes - capitalist and yeoman - of grantees. It is certainly a mistake to suppose that their presence in any way tends to the material welfare of the colony..."[66]

Coming from Lieutenant Popham Young, who had been associated with the project from the start, the fact was taken note of and consequently, the area set aside for these two categories was reduced by 1903. At the same time, measures were contemplated to compel yeoman grantees to settle permanently on the estate; transfer of proprietary rights without previous sanction was also

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66. Rev.Agri.Rev., November 1895, A.Pro. 398, F.41.

prohibited.[67] Various other methods of inducing yeoman to settle on Colony lands were also considered. Thus the Settlement Officer, Mianwali, noting that most yeomen did not sever their connection with old districts, hazarded a suggestion that perhaps, if offered "inducements like a lambardāri or other concessions in the Colony, they might willingly undertake to settle permanently in the Colony."[68] Even those not opposed to the abolition of this category of grants, clarified that this should not be interpreted as a decision to exclude from the benefits of the Colonisation scheme members of good yeomen families for, it was maintained, that yeomen make up a class which was "of great political value to the state."[69]

A few, though, did draw attention to the fact that even when yeomen resided in the Colonies, they had failed to attain any leading position and argued that "yeomen are not to be made by conscious selection on our part but will assuredly appear in due course in a tract of great prosperity where thrift and capacity will in no long time raise some peasants above the rest."[70]

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67. C.C.G., op.cit., p.29.

68. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro. 1-4, Evidence, p.620.

69. Rev.Agri.Rev., September 1901, A.Pro.11-14, F.188, p.3313.

70. Ibid.

The experience with capitalist grantees was not very positive either. But here again, government was s seen to be in two minds. While on the one hand attention was repeatedly drawn to the effects of 'absentee landlordism', which was definitely linked to the fate of capitalist grants, at the same time auction sales were on the increase. In Chunian Colony and on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal this was clearly visible. Preference for auction sales in these tracts was accompanied by an increase in reward grants, While in Chunian over 11,000 acres were disposed of in this manner, to Colonists drawn from Lahore district itself on the Lower Bari Doāb Canal, at least 29 per cent of the land was held by persons "who need not reside there unless they wish to and, whose only interest in the Colony is the amount of money that can be got out of it."[71] It seems that the high price that government received for auction sales compensated for the refusal of auction purchasers, as also of capitalists to reside on Colony lands. Recipients of reward grants amongst military pensioners, also found lacking in good Colonists, continued to find favour because, "they are the right class of men and, when they have collected their relatives around them to help in cultivation, justify their inclusion in the Colony."[72]

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71. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1908, A.Pro.1, F.273; also P.C.M., 1926, Vol.1, p.25.

72. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers File, p.862.

Peasant grantees, on the contrary, were found "to be the best colonists," with Jats, Arains, and Kambohs from the Central districts of Punjab taking the pride of place; of the Jats, practically all belonged to the Sikhs, who were "much the most important members of the agricultural community".[73]

By about 1917, most of the land in the Colonies had been distributed as well as brought under cultivation except for a portion reserved on the Lower Bari Doab Canal where, firstly a later round of soil surveys revealed that the total culturable land was considerably less than that originally anticipated, and secondly, the pace of distribution was further slowed down by the vast portion reserved for military reward grantees most of whom arrived only in 1920.[74]

Tables 2.7, 2.8 and 2.13 also give a picture of the composition of the allottees, with regard to caste and region from which they were drawn, as separate from the category on which allotments were made. Thus on the Lower Chenab Canal only 35.4 per cent land was distributed to original colonists; on the Lower Jhelum Canal only 13.76 per cent, for the Lower Bari Doab Canal, separate figures are not available, but if we take 'Hereditary Agriculturists' to comprise mostly of old settlers in the region,

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73. C.S.R., op.cit., p.37.

74. P.C.M., 1926, p.19.

Table 2.10

Allotments on the Lower Chenab Canal: Caste Breakdown

Allotments to immigrants: 64.6 per cent

Religion	Caste	Percentage
Hindu	Jat	23.67
	Kamboh	2.45
	Saini	0.87
	Rajput	0.52
	Misc.	4.30
Christian	Misc.	0.61
Government Departments, Municipalities, District Boards, Army RemountDeptt., Cavalry Stud Farms		0.70
Musalman	Jat	12.31
	Arain	10.70
	Rajput	2.75
	Pathan	1.43
	Gujjar	1.22
	Kamboh	0.56
	Misc.	2.51

Of the 35.4 per cent of land distributed amongst indigenous colonists, the break-up was as follows:

HITHARI

Religion	Caste	Per cent
Hindu	Jat Sikh	1.60
	Arora	0.78
	Mazhbi	0.63
	Others	0.60
Musalman	Rajput	3.54
	Jat	1.76
	Sayyeds & Qureshis	2.06
	others	0.54

NOMAD

Tribe	Sub-caste	Per cent
All Musalman	Kharral	3.00
	Watta	0.95
Jat	Chaddhar	0.85
Rajput	Bhatti	0.60
Jangli	Khichi	0.59
	Others	12.65
	Jatoi	1.93
Baloch		
	others	3.32

Source: C.S.R., p.43

then barely 11 per cent fell in their share, while in the Nili Bar Colony, this category again does not seem to have figured on the perennial canals though Janglis occupied 88.48 per cent of non-perennially irrigated land (see Table 2.13). Clearly, the original or older inhabitants of this region got a bad deal. This was clear, more so, in view of the preference shown for Sikh immigrant settlers, repeated in report after report while very rare was the kind of appreciation the Assistant Commissioner, Lyallpur, expressed for the Janglis for having shown "the most surprising results", who to begin with, "knew nothing of agriculture, but have quickly learnt it".[75]

The village settlements as they evolved amidst all this, although not forming a corporate body as in the old villages - nor could the villagers trace descent from a common ancestor - were, nevertheless, "far from being a chance collection of miscellaneous origin."[76] In the early years, allotments were so arranged as to have villages with grants of one category for, "when rich men and poor are mixed in one community in the Punjab there is a perpetual tendency for the poor to be consumed by the rich".[77] Settlement Officer Young had, at the outset, made clear that peasant grantees would be located in

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75. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers File, p.862, op.cit.

76. Punjab Census, Report, 1921, p.9.

77. P.C.M., 1907, Vol.1, p.27.

capitalist and yeoman villages only if a large unallotted balance remained for, he felt, it was "useless to settle a few peasants in villages in which almost all the land is held by nazrānā paying grantees, especially when the land available for allotment is markedly inferior. They would never be able to establish any sort of village community."[78]

On subsequent occasions too government clarified that it considered it "undesirable" to "use its position as the proprietor of large tracts in such manner as to upset the existing social and economic order".[79]

But what did these words really mean, in the context of the process that Colonisation set off? On the one hand the balance of forces in the region was given a jolt with the influx of the 'outsider' element. On the other when this combined with the care taken to group together members of one or two castes coming from the same part of the province, the natural course of events and pattern of settlement was disrupted. In government's view, religious compatibility was given foremost thought when grouping colonists; the reason advanced being that immigrant Sikhs and Hindus mixed with Muslim nomads would not allow for a conducive atmosphere, while the presence of Muslim immigrants along side the original tribes would be tolerated on grounds of a common faith.

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78. Rev. Agri. Irrigation, March 1899, A. Pro. 6, F. 14.

79. P.C.M., 1933, p. 110.

Thus in the course of allotment itself, official action laid out the outlines of the scenario for the future. The fact that the hostility of the original settlers was at this time turned on to government itself for the sudden and unprecedented attack it had launched on their rights in their traditional homes was sought to be pushed into the background. The nomads' refusal to shift from their 'rahnās', in an attempt to hold on to their settlements and grazing lands, was converted into 'hostility' which would lead to 'feuds, raids and reprisals' directed at the immigrants. Thus the pattern of settlement along fairly rigid religious distinctions was justified: On the Lower Chenab Canal, for instance, on the Upper Jhang Branch, to the north-west nomads and Hithāris were settled, to the south east, on the Burala Branch the Hindu and Sikh immigrants from east and Central Punjab, and both branches were fringed by Muslim allottees.[79a]

Allotments too were made in a discriminatory fashion, with the original occupants of the bar being meted out unfair treatment. Their demand for a square for each male was not heeded to. Instead they were allotted only a killā or two. Of the 9,450 acres set aside for them on the Jhelum Colony, till 1909, only

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79a. Deva Singh, Colonisation in the Rechna Doab, Monograph, No.7, 1929, pp.18-19.

5,689 acres were actually distributed and that too was practically unculturable land.[80] It was only after the 1907 agitation when the government encountered widespread opposition in immigrant villages that a conscious bid was made to woo sections of the old inhabitants - but again, attention was concentrated on old chieftains and big landowners who were often also religious or 'community' heads. Otherwise the land given to old inhabitants was markedly inferior both in terms of soil and availability of irrigation water.[81] This attitude of government was reflected in the landownership pattern that emerged subsequently.

Broadly speaking the following features emerged from the allotment policy in this context: (i) the total area allotted and subsequently retained by Sikhs and Hindus was considerably large; (ii) Muslims, old settlers and immigrants fared poorly, though this should not be taken to mean that there were no rich Muslim landowners. The Janglis and Hitharis were particularly badly off, both in terms of allotment, as pointed out earlier, as well as a consequence of subsequent economic developments; (iii) Apart from the land owned by them, Hindu money lenders later came to control a large portion of cultivated land through debt and mortgage transaction. Hindu and

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80. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, F.273 of 1908, Evidence, Note by Rudkin, Assistant Colonisation Officer, Jhelum Colony.

81. Ibid., pp.79 and 868.

TABLE 2.11

ALLOTMENTS ON THE UPPER CHENAB CANAL

Category	Acres	Percentage on total
For Auction purchasers	13,000	16.50
Jhelum Grantees	17,000	21.57
Compensatory Grants	24,198	30.70
Military grants	3,000	3.80
Civil grants	775	1.00
Reserve and Charagah	5,830	7.40
Forest Plantations	15,000	19.03
TOTAL	78,803	

Source : Rev. Agri. Irrigation, November 1913, A, Pro.-3, p. 24.

Table: 2.12

ALLOTMENTS ON THE NILI BAR UPTO 1925:

Perennial Irrigation	Acres	Percentage on Total allocmt.
1. Auction	3,62,250	68.16
2. Military	75,000	14.11
3. For land acquired on Canal	20,000	3.76
4. For Sugar, seed, fruit farm	4,500	0.85
5. Possible for Cattle	21,000	3.95
6. Criminal Tribes	5,000	0.94
7. For Agricultural Farms to graduates	2,000	0.38
8. Rewards	36,750	6.91
9. Police	5,000	0.94
TOTAL ON PERENNIAL	5,31,500	

NON PERENNIAL:

1. Janglis	2,30,400	88.48
2. Forests	30,000	11.52
TOTAL ON NON-PERENNIAL	2,60,000	

Source: S.S. Majithia Papers, Subject File, No.72, p.39. (NMML)

TABLE 2.13

COMPOSITION OF ALLOTTEES ON THE LOWER BARI DOAB CANAL

		Percentage
1.	Indigenous Population	16.00
2.	Immigrant Peasant Settlers	43.00
3.	Auction Purchasers	8.00
4.	Depressed Classes	2.00
5.	Non Peasant Grants to landed gentry and for services rendered to government.	7.50
6.	Grants on service conditions	10.00
7.	Grants for special objects e.g., Irrigation, forest, horse-runs, cattle, farms etc.	13.50

Source : P.C.M. 1926, p. 24.

TABLE 2.14

ALLOTMENTS UNDER DIFFERENT CATEGORIES (IN ACRES)

LOWER CHENAB CANAL

CATEGORY	ACRES
1. Old Proprietary	14,783
2. Ordinary Capitalists	89,174
3. Capitalists on Special Reward Terms	8,592
4. Yeoman	1,42,406
5. Stud Farms	7,874
6. Nazhabis	11,713
7. Peasants: Total	13,44,954
8. Peasant Lambardars	32,130
9. Camel Service Terms	79,633
10. Camel Service Chaudhris	5,314
11. Menials	32,658
TOTAL	17,69,231

LOWER JHELUM CANAL

CATEGORY	ACRES
To Horse-breeders (188,626-Abadkars, 22,279-sufedposh)	2,10,905
Private Stud Farm Grantees	6,754
Govt. Deptt. for remount Studs & Seed Farms)	33,549
Aborigines/Janglis	59,816
Non Horse-breeders	60,126
Arboricultural operations	4,458
Town, villages, etc.,	11,440
Roads, water-courses, canals etc.	29,952
Menials	10,744
Lambardari	7,099
TOTAL	4,34,843

LOWER BARI DOAB CANAL

CATEGORY	ORIGINAL PROPOSAL	FINAL SCHEME
1. Forests	40,000	30,970
2. Auction	1,25,000	69,196
3. for Regimental and special Agricultural objectives	1,00,500	86,619
4. Horse and Mule-breeding Peasants	6,89,500	5,02,607
5. Hereditary Agriculturists	70,000	81,749
6. Compensatory Grants	40,000	21,919
7. Depressed Classes	30,000	20,000
8. Rewards and Reserve	22,000	10,000
9. Landed Gentry Grants	75,000	59,852
total	11,92,000	8,82,912

UPPER CHENAB CANAL

CATEGORY	ACRES
For Auction purchasers	13,000
Jhelum Grantees	17,000
Compensatory grants	24,198
Military grants	3,000
Civil grants	775
Reserve and Charagah	5,830
Forest Plantations	15,000
TOTAL	78,803

NILIBAR

Perennial Irrigation CATEGORY	ACRES
Auction	3,62,250
Military	75,000
For land acquired on Canal	20,000
For Sugar, seed, fruit farm	4,500
Possible for Cattle	21,000
Criminal Tribes	5,000
To Agricultural Farms for graduates	2,000
Rewards	36,750
Police	5,000
TOTAL ON PERENNIAL	5,31,500
Non Perennials:	
Janglis	2,30,400
Forests	30,000
TOTAL ON NON-PERENNIAL	2,60,900

SOURCE:

1. Gazetteer, Chenab Colony, 1904, p.
2. L.J.C.Gazetteer, 1920, and P.C.R., Shahpur, 1915 - 16.
3. Rev. Agri. Rev. A, Pro.18, F.309 of 1916.
4. Rev.Agri.Irrigation,November 1913,A,Pro.3,
5. S.S.Majithia Papers,Subject File,No.72, p. 39.

Sikh agriculturists who also engaged in moneylending also came to control a vast portion of the operational holdings in this region.

In Multan, where 80 per cent of the population was Muslim, and only 19 per cent Hindu, the occupational pattern was distinct. The former were almost entirely agriculturists but except for the Syeds, Pathans, Qureshis and Khokhars who were fairly large landowners, the rest of the Muslim cultivators were owners of very small holdings and deeply in debt.[82] The pattern remained the same throughout, with a large part of the land being owned by Hindus who, "took no part in agriculture themselves."[83] In Lahore, in the post-depression period, almost 67 per cent of the land was in the hands of Jats who were mostly Sikhs.[84] In the older Sohag Para Colony of Montgomery, similarly, 42 per cent of the land was held by Sikh Jats.[85] In Lyallpur, Hindu and Sikh Jats held 29 per cent of the cultivated land in 1924, while Muslim Jats together with Janglis, owned 23 per cent. The latter were found "sadly backward" as a class and the old villages were said to present a "marked contrast", to the neat chaks of the rest of the district.[86] The Jhang

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82. S.R. Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.15.
83. S.R. Multan, 1921, op.cit., p.7.
84. S.R. Lahore, 1935-39, p.2.
85. S.R. Montgomery, 1891-99, p.86.
86. S.R.Lyallpur, 1924, op.cit.

Table 2.15

Acreage Held by Different Castes in Lyallpur District

	Lyallpur tahsil	Samundri tahsil	Toba Tek Singh tahsil
	(percentages)		
Muslims			
Jats	24	10	20
Rajputs	3	4	1
Arains	9	6	27
Janglis	12	24	7
Gujar, Qureshi, Baloch, Syed		5, 4, 9, 3	
Others			
Agriculturists	3	8	3
Non-agriculturists	1	-	1
Sikhs			
Jats	33	15	23
Kambohs	3	2	4
Others			
Agriculturists	1	-	1
Non-agriculturists	1	2	1
Hindus & Others			
Agriculturists	-	-	1
Non-agriculturists	4	4	4
Christians			
Lambardar	6	3	4
Others		1	1
District Board, Rural Department			1
Total	100	100	100

Source: A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit.
A.R. Samundri, op.cit.
A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op.cit.

Hitharis, who later came to form a part of Samundri tahsil, Lyallpur, were found to have been the most shabbily treated by the British. Even though these had had more settled agricultural traditions, as compared to the nomadic graziers of the Bar, they were given 5 Killās or less, and at best half a square at the time of allotment. The stated reason for this was to prevent the complete abandonment of their riverain holdings. What took place, however, was the reverse, for, the small allotments being both economically and socially unattractive, "as soon as they ever could, more than half of them sold or mortgaged the colony land and returned to their riverain homes.[86a] The rise in the value of land added to the process, and by 1940, a great deal of land had passed from the hands of Muslim cultivators and the original Bar settlers, to the Hindu, trading community.[87]

Not only did Muslim cultivators and original settlers of this region suffer in the form of receiving smaller allotments, but the quality of land alloted to them was also inferior. On the Rakh Branch Circle, the classification itself, it was pointed out, was based "more on tribal distinctions than differences in soil and water supply".[88] Thus "Sikhs, Arains and nazrānā

86a. A.R.Samundri, 1936, op.cit., p.5.
87. S.R.Lyallpur, 1940, op.cit., p.16.
88. A.R.Rakh Branch Circle, August 1913, op.cit.

paying grantees mostly occupy the first two classes, Jat Musalmans the second and third, and Janglis the last three.[89] The Janglis who resented the occupation of their ancestral grazing lands in the first place, and had, therefore, been unwilling to receive allotments at all, found that ultimately "all the worst land fell to them." In Toba Tek Singh, as late as the 1930s it was found that with inferior soil, tail irrigation and torrid climate . the land held by the Janglis and Muslims formed "the least attractive part of the Lower Chenab Colony."[90]

Section IV - Grazing and Ownership Rights

Colonisation and, specifically allotment policy, brought into the centre of the debate the question of rights in land. There were two broad aspects to this problem. Firstly, there was the question of the rights that the old inhabitants of the region had enjoyed - what was the fate of these under the colonisation scheme? The second related to the rights acquired by Colony grantees under the conditions on which allotment was made.

With regard to the first aspect, that is rights that old inhabitants enjoyed before colonisation, the

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89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

most glaring example of how annexation and subsequent Colonisation changed the whole situation may be seen in the fate of forest and grazing rights. The early settlement reports for most of these districts, particularly Jhang and Gujranwala, as well as the Jhelum district, give some insight into the disastrous consequences of developments in the post-annexation period.[91] Government on the other hand alleged that the original settlers were out to take advantage of lack of a central authority after the decline of Sikh power in the region, as well as, later, of the lack of sufficient knowledge of the actual position on the part of the British. The fact that control of the wealth of this region, even when unknown and unexplored was of sufficient importance to government can be seen from the fact that early Settlement Officers dwelt at length on this issue in their reports and reported on a series of decisions taken to curb what they saw as baseless claims of rights on the part of the local people.

The first successful step in the direction of appropriation of what came to be referred to as wastelands, was taken by the Inland Customs Department, with the establishment of a government monopoly over the salt

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91. cf. S.R., Jhang, 1880; S.R. Gujranwala, 1889-94; S.R. Jhelum, 1882.

Brandreth's action in Jhelum district was similar to appropriation of the vast 'Rakhs' in the Sandal and Kerāna Bār covering large portions of Jhang district also.[94] Interestingly, after first having asserted and established its claim to the forest wealth of the region, in 1852, the Punjab Government issued a circular stating that henceforth, "all uncultivated land above three times the amount of cultivation is government property", thereby reserving its right to take and dispose of the rest of the land as and when it felt the need to do so.[95]

The 1852 circular, while apparently harmless, proved to be the opposite. For, while such a limit may possibly have worked well in the homogeneous villages of the plains, demarcation on the basis of three times the cultivated land in a village could not achieve the same in the scattered, uneven terrain of Jhelum as well as some of the other districts where the countryside was dotted with settlements of ten or twenty hamlets spread out over patches of detached cultivated land and grazing area, or frequently broken up by large spaces of irretrievably barren ground or even ravines and sandy torrents. The application of arithmetical calculations to such regions could not but lead to disastrous results. Not surprisingly it was found that:

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94. S.R. Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p. 123.

95. S.R. Jhelum, op.cit., p. 165.

> ...the grazing left to some villages was palpably insufficient. In other cases the boundary lines of large Rakhs were pressed close to the homesteads of the villages. The pillare were sometimes actually built in the courty ards of dwelling houses. In some of the smaller Rakhs the whole demarcation was a kind of burlesque abuse of government policy...[96]

The senior officials put the blame for such a situation on the Patwaris, but it was admitted that there were few Rakhs which were "entirely free from these vexatious errors of detail."[97] It was obvious that the measures were ill-conceived from the start and "excited a discontent that gradually grew more acute as cultivation spread and the area of free pasture diminished."[98]

It was only in 1864 that fresh instructions regarding general demarcation were issued, enjoining that the principle of three times the cultivated areas was to be used "in an intelligent and not an arithmetical way. Reasonable grazing ground was to be left to the village in all cases..."[99]

Government suffered further loss of face when, having earlier pleaded the conservationist cause, it promptly gave permission to close down parts of the Rakhs to allow for building of the Jhelum-Rawalpindi

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96. Ibid., p.167.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid., p.165.

resources of the region. The Department also assumed "a large but vague preventive jurisdiction throughout the country lying around the Salt Mines".[92] This jurisdiction extended to all the natural resources of the region.

Meanwhile, with the start of proceedings for the first regular settlements in the region, this process of extending arbitrary jurisdiction over the forest wealth of the region began in real earnest. Thus in Jhelum district, officials reported that ferocious quarrels were on among the residents, often between residents of one village and another, as boundaries of the hill wastes belonging to different villages were to be drawn. It was alleged that, in Jhelum tahsil particularly, whole ranges of hills were parcelled out among different villages. Brandreth, in charge of settlement operations, sought an easy solution to the entire 'problem':

> To make Government the owner of these wastes seemed to be an easy and advantageous method of stifling the quarrels and of securing protection for the trees and brushwood. Accordingly, a large area of hill waste in the Salt Range was declared to be goverment preserve; and was, for the most part, excluded from the village field maps and demarcated in a rude and insufficient manner. Some other smaller tracts were similarly dealt with...[93]

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92. S.R. Jhelum, op.cit., p. 164.

93. Ibid.

railway line. Wood was unhesitantly felled to meet the demands made by the Railway engineers and in fact it was not till 1879 that any part of the Rakhs were constituted as Reserved forests.[100]

All this time, the land constituted as Reserved Forests was placed under Forest Settlement Officers. Of the rest of the Rakhs appropriated, some more abolished and restored to the villages from which they had originally been taken, while the remaining were declared to be Government Waste Lands under Section 48 of the Punjab Laws Act. It was land falling under this last category which later came to be allotted as grants in the Canal Colonies.[101]

The fate of the Rakhs was closely tied up with the grazing rights that people residing here enjoyed. For the rural population of these tracts the right to graze cattle was not merely a question of having the freedom to use unclaimed wastes for this purpose, for, in fact grazing rights had an important role to play in the economy of the region at this point of time. Government while conceding that even Reserved Forest tracts were not to be altogether closed against grazing, taking of fuel etcetera since, "these Rakhs are so bound up with the pastoral economy of the district that they cannot be administered from a purely

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100. Ibid., p.168

101. Ibid., p.169.

forest point of view, maintained that "portions only of them must be closed for reproduction, and the remainder held available, on payment, for supplying the pastoral and other necessities of the adjoining villages."[102]

Inadvertently, the local inhabitants' grazing rights underwent notable restriction. What was commonly recognised by the British was their right to graze cattle on payment. Here some distinction was drawn between those who enjoyed grazing rights customarily and those who did not, with the former having to pay a smaller amount. Also, in some cases the right extended to only a fixed number of heads of cattle, while in others it applied to all the cattle of a village. However, since government reserved for itself the right to temporary closure with respect to all Rakhs these grazing rights extended to only those portions of Rakhs as may be open from time to time. If open to grazing the land was given on contract to lambardars, or, if none was forthcoming, it was auctioned.[103]

In other words, the years witnessed an erosion of traditional forest and grazing rights through two related processes. Firstly, by Government functioning on the

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102. Ibid., p. 173.

103. Ibid., p. 172.

basic premise that all 'uncultivated waste' was State property and secondly, by the failure to correctly and speedily draw up rules and procedures for the practical application of whatever decisions were being taken with regard to recognition of even limited grazing rights.

The results were only too obvious. Thus the Jhang settlement report observed that "all the Bār round Kerāna that was transferred to Jhang in 1861, has become it is not known exactly how, government property..."[104] It all began, it seems, with the Sandal Bār where, the notion that all waste land in the Bār was Government property was first integrated into the land revenue and tirni system. Subsequently, the district officials saw "no reason for treating the Kerāna Bār in a different manner."[105] Consequently, in both, the Sandal and the Kerāna Bār, "no private right of property whatsoever was recognised in 1861."[106] The inhabitants of the tract were charged with tirni and allowed to graze cattle throughout the Bār on payment.

Settlement Officers, on the other hand, alleged that the local inhabitants were taking advantage of the interim period, between annexation and revenue settlement, to annex vast areas of pasture to their holdings. Nisbet,

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104. S.R. Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.123.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.

incharge of settlement operations in Gujranwala in 1864-68 alleged that the residents of Bār lands in Hafizabad and Gujranwala tahsils had annexed such enormous areas of culturable waste that estates with an area exceeding 5,000 acres were common, while there were five estates with an area of 10,000 acres with only a few wells and one covering 23,000 acres with only two working wells.[107] The assessment of these pasture lands formed an important feature of Nisbet's assessment, for, he threw totally overboard the earlier assessment of the vast 'wastes' in the district at Rs.3,000. Instead he drew up estimates by a comparison with the income derived by government from the leases of adjoining rakhs. In his initial assessment, Nisbet aimed at deriving Rs.11,475 and progressively up to Rs.23,324 from the pasture lands in the district.[108] It may be worthwhile to note here that the previous settlement 1864-68, conducted under Prinsep's guidance had attempted 'moderation' in land revenue assessment consequent upon the complete breakdown of the earlier summary settlement of 1847-48 as well as the first Regular Settlement of 1853-54 which had resulted in large scale desertion by cultivators as well as a refusal to contract a settlement on the terms proposed by government.[109]

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107. S.R. Gujranwala, 1889-94, p.19.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

The Lahore settlement report similarly charged cultivators with "casting covetous eyes on these Rakhs," while recording that one of the first measures taken by the British administration was to demarcate the boundaries for waste lands and also that in the course of the first regular settlement, "additions were made to the numbers of Rakhs by the marking off, as Government lands, tracts of jungle, of which the ownership had belonged to no one..."[110] Interestingly, the Commissioner, Lahore Division expressed himself in favour of leasing of Rakhs to 'a few' from the Punjab gentry, "who have served us well in the late crisis..." (i.e. 1857).[111] Some clue as to the enormous resources involved can be had from the fact that in Lahore district alone the Settlement Report made a note of over 3 lakh acres of land constituted as Rakhs under different heads, including approximately 2 lakh acres available for Colonisation.[112] Chunian Colony in Lahore, was in fact formed on land thus appropriated.

In Montgomery, by the end of the 19th century government had managed to impose a quinquennial tirni assessment. While the official claim was that such a system was acceptable to the residents and that an annual payment of the 5 yearly fixed sum, each village was free to graze cattle in government waste in the district, the

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110. S.R. Lahore, 1860, p.20.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p.30.

fact was that many villages "had refused to accept the quinquennial assessment."[113] Further, the 1891 tirni rates were still being charged in 1899, despite the prevailing famine conditions accompanied by shortage of grazing ground as well as a high cattle mortality rate."[114]

Increasingly what was happening was that vast portions of waste land which had earlier been a part of common lands were being appropriated as government property, with government reserving the right to lease it out on its own terms. The Shahpur district gazetteer, for instance, noted that prior to annexation there was free grazing in the Bar and the Thal tracts.[115] By 1897, a forest settlement had been carried out and "all questions of rights were decided."[116] While in the hills certain grazing rights were recognised, in the plains no such right was admitted. In the case of both an annual lease was to be made out, on payment of a fixed sum. Here as well, reference was made to the attempt by zamindars to ring-fence up to distance of several miles around the village and to represent this as the village boundary. Had this been permitted, officials argued, "the whole jungle, which may hereafter become valuable

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113. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1899, A. Pro. 29, F.5.

114. Ibid.

115. D.G. Shahpur 1917, op.cit., p.217.

116. Ibid.

property to the State, would have been appropriated by a few thousand cattle graziers, whose annual contribution to revenue does not in the aggregate exceed 35,000 rupees.[117] The principle supposedly adopted in Shahpur was to allow an area of waste land calculated upon the number of cattle, at 4 acres a head in the Bār and 10 acres in the Thal, with 5 sheep or goat being counted as equivalent to an ox for this purpose, and the remaining area being constituted as government Rakhs. But it was admitted that the method was not strictly adhered to and boundaries were often drawn up arbitrarily. All this while, "so averse were the villagers to this arrangement that they threw every obstacle in the way of the persons employed for the demarcation of their boundaries."[118]

That the problem continued even after Colonisation became clear in the course of the proceedings of the Canal Colonies' Committee. Many who appeared before the committee voiced the opinion that charāgāh should be treated as shāmilat or village common and that government should stay out of charāgāh.[119] The official response to this, put forward by Malik Fateh Muhamad, Naib Tahsildar, Khangah Dogran was classic:

> The charāgāh is the property of Government, which has out of generosity, placed it at the disposal of the colonists.[120]

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117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Rev. Agri. Rev. April 1909, A. Pro. 1-4, Ans. File, p. 177.
120. Ibid., p. 178.

The government of course further defended its position by pointing out that if it actually ceased to be associated, the charāgāh would, for all practical purposes disappear since they would be denuded of all trees and bushes which would very soon be cut down by the influential grantees and the petty officials.[121] Needless to add that the last was not devoid of an element of truth. But what is to be noted is that the original settlers, whose fortunes were in any case adversely affected by Colonisation suffered further erosion of their rights, both at the hands of government and the more influential grantees. It is very likely that whatever charāgāh was set aside, 10 per cent for example on the Rakh Branch of the Lower Chenab Canal, was so placed as to give the immigrant settlers greater opportunity to benefit from it.

Rights of Colony Grantees

The second aspect of this problem was the rights on which the various categories of grantees, but more specifically, the peasant grantees held land in the Colonies. For, while these were being allotted land under conditions which were not quite normal, it is important to see on what terms they held this land and, how far the statement of conditions of allotment incorporated prevailing custom with regard to this issue.

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121. Ibid., p. 182.

It may be pointed out that the Colony grantees held land directly from government under the Punjab Tenancy Act, 1876, already amended in subsequent years, but again specifically amended in 1893 to facilitate the process of allotment. The latest amendment did away with the need to execute separate lease deeds, making it possible for government to lease out land to tenants who held the least without any formal execution or registration of the agreement on stamped paper. The terms of allotment were notified in the name of separate statements of conditions, which again were drawn up keeping in mind the separate conditions for the different allotment categories.[122] We shall not here go into the details of the terms and conditions, but specifically focus on the aspects that were posed as major issues in the course of the 1905-07 disturbances in this region.

The issue of proprietory rights came to the fore in 1905-06 when a new Bill, the Canal Colonies' Bill, 1906, was introduced in and adopted by the Legislative Council. Government maintained that the Bill on the one hand was intended to "cure past defects," and at the same time to restrict rights earlier left ambiguous.[123]

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122. For Statement of conditions for different categories see Gazetteer, Chenab Colony, 1904.

123. Punjab Govt. Proc. October 1907, A Pro. 13-28, F.205, of

While reiterating that "all rights of ownership in the Colonies are subject to limitations set forth in the statement of conditions," the bill further provided for use of "coercive powers" in order to ensure fulfilment of conditions.[124] Section 15 of the Bill sought to "forbid present and future Crown tenants to dispose of their holdings by will;" sections 18 and 27 (1) asserted "the right of the local government to limit inheritance to a selected heir or to the eldest son, a measure considered necessary when land is held on horse-breeding or other service conditions."[125]

Several points emerged in the course of the passage of the Bill and mounting opposition to it; firstly, the drafting of the Bill was unfortunately vague and rather than remove the cloud of doubt from the 1893 provisions it added to it; secondly, the excessive secrecy maintained with regard to the Bill, aroused the most lively apprehension. These related to the manner in which the legislation was sought to be adopted. The more serious aspect was that the grantees, peasant grantees in this case, maintained that the understanding given to them at the time of allotment was that they would "on fulfilment of certain conditions be entitled to purchase proprietory rights over the lands held by them; "while they found that

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124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

by the new Bill the Sarkār was instead going to take away their rights.[126]

Clearly the grantees backed their claim to proprietorship on two grounds - (1) the understanding given to them, and (2) the custom prevailing with regard to rights over reclaimed land.

Government refuted both. Wilson, Financial Commissioner asserted that, "not one of the colonists from the old districts, when he accepted a grant in the colony, had any idea in his mind that by reclaiming his grant of State-owned land he would establish a legal or moral claim to be declared proprietor of his holdings..."[127] Sir Louis Dane, Lieutenant Governor, Punjab went further:

> the peasant grantees have no shadow of claim to proprietory right either as reclaimers at their own cost of waste land - their labour has only added at the most 20 or 30 per cent to the prarie value of land - or on the ground that they had any reason to believe that they would acquire this right or did so believe.[128]

At best, Sir Dane, on behalf of government was prepared to consider the grant of proprietory right as a 'concession' but then this was not to be asserted as a 'right', it should clearly be treated as a concession "so as not to minimise the value of any concession".[129]

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126. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers File, p.110.

127. Ibid., p.147.

128. Rev.Agri.Rev., October 1907, A.Pro.13-28, F.205, of 1907, p.790.

129. Ibid.

While both, government and the Colonists stuck to their versions, ambiguity seems to have emerged as a common factor. To put the record straight, the 1893 statement of conditions, it is true made no mention of grant of proprietory rights to peasant grantees - it only ensured occupancy right: not, surprisingly then the memorial of the Punjab Colonists, submitted to the Governor General, failed to pinpoint the issue; while voicing the several apprehensions of colonists, it only talked of government's attempt to "remove the so-called defects and ommissions at the sacrifice of the existing rights and interests of the colonists"[130] by unilaterally putting an end to the 1893 contract.

While the Colonists' Memorial left the demands rather vague the Colonies' Committee was rather forthright in indicting the government, pointing out that "no variation in an agreement can be made by one party to it without the consent of the other."[131] Had government not extended any assurance or promise regarding proprietory rights why should the Committee have been so forthright in its criticism? Yet more surprising is the fact that throughout this agitation and the proceedings of the Committee neither the colonists nor government deemed it fit to give thought to the rights of the

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130. Ibid.

131. Ibid.

Janglis, Hitharis and other old settlers of the region. Having already been deprived of their old lands, as well as rights in the Rakhs, they were now being told that even the small allotments on the Colonies were theirs only on occupancy terms. The fact that many of the original settlers of the region were heavily indebted (see Chapter V) compounded their misery and probably left them little option but to pledge away even these minimum rights. What happened to the older inhabitants of the region? On what basis were they being deprived of proprietory rights?

The reports are silent on this matter. The only saving feature of the entire series of events being that as per the recommendation of the Canal Colonies' Committee, proprietory rights were granted to all unconditionally, except horse-breeding grantees in 1912.[132]

The matter was resolved with the implementation of the Canal Colonies' Committee while the 1906 Bill never attained sanction of the Viceroy. But what emerged clearly from the entire series of events was that

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132. Rev.Agri.Rev.April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers File, p.46. The effort to impose the rule of primogeniture on grants in the Lower Jhelum Colony suffered the same fate. The grantees argued their case more forcefully on this count though referring to customary law; the fact that the imposition of this condition affected others' share in property; may even make marriage a problem for the non-first-borns; was totally against the essential features of the village community pattern... While government repeatedly drew attention to the problem partitioning would create on conditional grants, the Canal Colonies' Committee emphatically stated that ordinary law of succession should apply.

government had no qualms about divesting the settlers of the region of even the most basic rights that they had enjoyed customarily. The fact that some rights were ultimately conceded stemmed more from the recognition of a political reality and not out of respect for the rights of the citizens it had come to dominate.

Conclusion

We have seen above that the extension of the Colonisation scheme was a result, largely, of a wide range of imperial needs, financial and otherwise. In doing so our objective has been not so much to expose the hollowness of the philanthropic claims government was making, as to explore the various complex, though at times also mundane, needs of the imperial system as they manifest themselves in the context of the Canal Colonies. The outcome of these policies had serious implications. Allotments on the canals, both in terms of the different categories under which land was distributed, as well as the castes and social groups which formed the majority of allottees again was important. Two features stood out in this: firstly a preference for the immigrant Sikh peasantry as opposed to the Jangli and other Muslim settlers who were original settlers of this land; secondly, political considerations gained precedence over other factors in allotment

procedures. Both these trends contained within them the seeds of politico-administrative policy which came to the surface in later years. Meanwhile, the old inhabitants of the region suffered at another level too: they were divested of their vast grazing grounds as the lands were appropriated by government for sale as Colony lands. Deprived of their customary rights and given unfair treatment in allotments, the Janglis and other old inhabitants including Muslims were faced with a perceptible decline in status in their own homelands. The manner in which Colonisation proceeded thus contained within it the seeds of future conflict.

Chapter III

THE PEASANT UNDER THE CANAL COLONY REGIME

In this chapter we look at the revenue and irrigation policy as pursued in the Canal Colonies. The focus here is not on policy formulation per se; rather, we examine the nature and extent of revenue demand on the peasant, and the efforts made over time to increase this. What were the reasons the state advanced to explain this increase? Did it affect all equally? We also go into some details of the process of distribution of Canal water; the problems faced therein and the role of the 'canal bureaucracy'. Lastly, we examine the impact of both, land revenue and water-rate demand. Did it benefit all or were some entitled to relief under Kharābā? To what extent was relief given? What impact did state policy relating to these issues have vis-a-vis landlords and peasants or different strata of the peasantry?

The Background

As early as 1856, John Lawrence, recognised as the main force behind the 'Punjab School', wrote above revenue policy that:

> moderation of demand is not only due morally and actually to the people, but is also conducive to the best interests of the government.[1]

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1. Chief Commissioner's despatch to the Financial Commissioner, No.799, dated 9.9.1956.

Henceforth, Lawrence's statement was repeated in the course of almost every discussion on revenue policy in the state in a ritualistic manner. Often this was done so as to ward off any criticism of land revenue policy as it evolved; by keeping alive the memory of the paternalist tradition, Punjab officials also hoped to justify as 'moderate' the revenue demand even in the face of successive revision.[2] Bhattacharya, while discussing the fiscal burden on the peasantry in Central and Eastern Punjab, also draws attention to the relationship between evolution of settlement policy and the political needs - the former geared to ensuring a "long term increase of fiscal demand," while the latter pressed for "sustaining rural passivity if not loyalty".[3] Often the effort was to contrast this thrust of policy to highlight the point that British rule brought peace and prosperity to Punjab as against the anarchy and tyranny of Sikh rule. In the years to come, the record-breaking financial returns from the Canal Colonies were specifically cited in official writing to draw vivid pictures of this prosperity in Punjab. It needs to be noted here that while the province

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2. The ideological context, its purpose and limitations, in relation to land revenue policy have been recently discussed by Charlesworth in his study of agriculture and agrarian society in the Bombay Presidency. Charlesworth points out that while maintaining its 'closeness' to the utilitarian ideals, revenue policy in Bombay Presidency was also "basically empirical, worked out to accord with local reality". cf. Charlesworth, N., 1985, pp.40-60.

3. cf. Bhattacharya, N., 1985, op.cit., Chapter I. Discussion on the fiscal burden.

as a whole was contributing a large chunk to the royal treasury, in the form of revenue and irrigation receipts, within Punjab it was the Colony tracts which yielded the most; by 1928 the eight Colony districts contributed more revenue than the rest of the twenty-one district put together.[4] At the time of the 1915 settlement, the demand on account of land revenue and cesses in the Chenab Colony alone amounted to Rs.69,45,345, the sum exceeding that paid by any other district in India. If irrigation receipts were also taken into account, the Chenab Colony assumed on unchallenged position, prompting the Financial Commissioner to comment:

> that such pride of place should have been attained by a tract which thirty years ago was an arid wilderness, is a phenomenon which can never be sufficiently dwelt upon by those who seek to appraise the results and achievements of British rule in India.[5]

Government demand in the Colony tracts consisted of two broad heads - of land revenue and water charges. Both were of a fluctuating nature. The reasons behind this initially being (a) the tracts being subject to river action and the uncertainties thereof and (b) the continued extension of irrigation itself ruled out a fixed demand since the state wished to share in benefits arising from new lands coming under cultivation.

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4. P.C.R., 1928-29, p. 1.

5. C.S.R., op.cit., Note by Financial Commissioner, p. 1.

/By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the retention of the fluctuating system had become the subject of a full-fledged controversy involving the Government of India and the Government of Punjab on the one hand and, the latter and its own district officers at another. The agriculturists, whose interests were at stake, were hardly allowed a say in the matter. Meanwhile pressure mounted on the Government of Punjab to ensure a greater fixity of demand, with the Revenue Department emphasising that the system of assessment should be as simple as possible and the larger the amount of fixed revenue, the greater was the degree of simplicity that could be ensured." The government's position was that it stood to lose so long as fluctuating demand was retained, though how it did so, was never made clear. The specious argument that the cultivators' preference for a fluctuating assessment was based on the fact that "people think by paying a small sum of illegal money they are able to escape a large legal demand" was not acceptable to its own settlement officers.[6] They in fact, were more inclined to accept that under a fluctuating demand the cultivator could clutch on to the hope of getting some /remissions due to Kharābā while this option would be totally closed under a fixed assessment.

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6. Rev.Agri.Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.43, F.53.

Government's desire for a fixed revenue demand needs to be understood in the context of its attempt in this period to consolidate its revenue base through revision of settlements based on new procedures, which were supposedly derived from the experience of the early settlements.[7] But government's general desire to achieve consolidation, did not lessen the dilemma settlement officers faced at the local level in trying to make the most of what could at best be described as a very fluid situation:

> If I propose a fixed demand either on their present irrigation or on the average irrigation of the last seven years, and this demand is a fairly full one, the assessment is bound to break down and be too heavy by the time the canal department have attained the utopia of 70 per cent. If, on the other hand, I assume that the average matured area is 70 per cent and base a fixed assessment on this government will lose very large sums of money during the period that the irrigation of a village now doing 115 per cent of its allotted area is being cut down to 70 per cent. A successful fixed assessment depends on a successful forecast of what is about the average matured area which a village can expect for the cycle for which the assessment is proposed.[8]

Meanwhile, landholders hesitated to accept the fixed demand having "already had too much change." illustrating their point they said:

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7. For a fuller discussion of the different phase of revenue policy in Punjab cf. P.S.M., Douie, 1930, Chapter VI.

8. Rev. Agri. Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.43, F.53, op.cit. Instructions regarding land revenue assessment in the Lower Chenab Canal.

> The government had lately enhanced malikana; subsequently an owner's rate was imposed; now it was proposed to enhance the land revenue and fix the revenue demand, after which it may decide to fix water rates; all this meant new arrangements with tenants and dislocation of agricultural arrangements.[9]

The resistance that government's pressure to impose a fixed assessment met with from landowners has been interpreted as indicative of the power of the elite.[10] Alig argues that:

> fluctuating assessment provided many more opportunities than fixed demand for illegal agreements with subordinate officials: flexibility and uncertainty could be used by the strong for their own interests.[11]

Ali points to the losses of state revenue with regard to both land revenue and water rates, maintaining that:

> it worked against the interests of the rest of the population, by denying public revenues of their due share of profits from the capital invested in the canal projects.[12]

Ali has a point, but it may also be pointed out here that it was unlikely that a shift to fixed assessment would have cut into this big landlord canal bureaucracy network, or, for that matter, that had the state acquired

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9. Ibid.

10. Ali, I., 1982, op.cit., p.25.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

a bigger share as revenue, these would have benefitted the rest of the population. Given the prevailing social inequality, a fixed demand was likely to have further increased the burden on them.

This is supported by the fact that the advocates of a fixed demand were also pressing for a high scale of assessment, arguing that higher assessments would not really injure the mass of the peasant owners while those having reservations on the fluctuating demand itself were quick to point out that a fixed demand would have to be pitched "so low as to entail a very large loss of revenue which is fairly due to government as representing the general tax payer and, even so, would tend to ruin quite a considerable proportion of the cultivators on the Canal, and in short would give rise to evils of greater magnitude than are necessarily attached to a system of fluctuating assessment."[13]

Unable to convince its own officers either way, Punjab retained the system of fluctuating assessment till the 1930s, when a 'sliding scale' based on prices was evolved as a basis of land revenue assessment.

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13. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Evidence, p.192.

Section I - The Trends and Components of Revenue Demands

Trends in Quantum Demanded:

Table 3.1 shows the quantum of revenue demand and increase in the same over a period of years for different districts. Here a few points need to be made. Firstly, the figures bear out the fact that there was a substantial increase in demand over the years. The official contention, nevertheless, remained one of 'leniency' of revenue demand. In fact it was even argued that 'land revenue, measured in rupees, has during the last 35 years only kept pace with the increase in the total cultivated area," and that in order to pay land revenue, a cultivator had to sell, at village prices, "a much smaller fraction of his total produce than he had to sell for this purpose 35 years ago."[14]

Some of the points that emerge from the table may be noted before proceeding further. The early period marked an increase in land revenue despite a fall in cultivated area registered in some districts - Shahpur and Multan specifically. While assessment reports for Montgomery and Gujranwala testify to a similar trend in parts of the district, the extension of cultivation in other parts of the same districts seems to have balanced

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14. Rev.Agri.Rev., Feb.1908, A.Pro.28.

Table: 3.1

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA AND LAND REVENUE

SHAHPUR:

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1875-76	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase in 1875-76
1	2	3	4	5
1875-76	420361	-	418173	-
1883-84	557543	32.63	420786	0.62
1888-89	608609	44.78	421946	0.90
1893-94	651757	55.05	570172	36.35
1897-98	454200	8.05	604814	44.63
1907-08	876167	108.43	911885	118.06
1917-18	1184269	181.73	2283352	446.03
1920-21	1013770	141.17	2219619	430.79
1932-33	1320249	214.08	2543878	508.33
1935-36	1307426	211.02	2318665	454.48
1937-38	1280926	204.72	2346953	461.24

MULTAN:

1875-76	624640	-	541760	-
1883-84	518622	— 16.97	587842	8.50
1888-89	596726	— 4.47	837151	54.52
1893-94	774372	23.97	1043030	92.53
1897-98	973651	55.87	1150565	112.38
1907-08	1089682	74.45	906028	67.24
1917-18	1091207	74.69	1560513	188.05
1920-21	1363692	118.32	1231675	127.35
1932-33	1377615	120.55	2515764	364.37
1935-36	1522554	143.75	4547285	739.35
1937-38	1610140	157.77	5478214	911.19

Cont'd.. Table 3.1

JHANG:	Cultivated area (in acres)	% increase on 1875-1878	Land revenue	% increase on 1875-1878
1875-76	264366	-	294590	-
1883-84	344977	30.49	323326	9.75
1888-89	345651	30.75	367681	24.81
1893-94	393760	48.95	395307	34.19
1897-98	696769	163.56	637705	116.47
1907-08	719348	172.10	751187	154.99
1917-18	726007	174.62	1333119	352.53
1920-21	701446	165.33	1352357	359.06
1932-33	664652	151.41	1349026	337.93
1935-36	701667	165.41	1421599	382.57
1937-38	714194	170.15	1434312	386.88
MONTGOMERY:				
1875-76	420957	-	320761	-
1983-84	365975	- 13.06	297287	- 7.32
1888-89	433024	2.87	292542	- 8.80
1893-94	535115	27.12	370739	15.58
1897-98	467604	11.08	418073	30.34
1907-08	768998	82.68	397530	23.93
1917-18	891588	111.80	1084017	237.95
1920-21	1024585	143.39	3326881	937.18
1932-33	1307071	210.50	3030856	844.90
1935-36	1329540	215.84	4861174	1415.51
1937-38	1446048	243.51	4837690	1408.19

Cont'd.. Table 3 .1

LAHORE:

	Cultivated area	% increase on 1875-76	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% increase on 1875-76
1875-76	1080541	-	648766	-
1883-84	1156385	7.04	691095	6.52
1888-89	1189960	10.13	690220	6.39
1893-94	1246454	15.35	892210	37.52
1897-98	979115	- 9.39	943968	45.50
1907-08	852791	-21.08	1196195	84.38
1916-17	1152805	6.69	1314732	102.65
1920-21	1175040	8.75	1297316	99.97
1932-33	795296	- 29.73	1479660	128.07
1935-36	948195	- 12.25	1545398	138.21
1937-38	906169	- 8.73	1548851	138.74

GUJRANWALA:

1875-76	553482	-	598084	-
1883 -84	606314	9.55	648778	8.48
1888-89	717403	29.62	640525	7.10
1893-94	798926	44.35	741826	24.03
1897-98	719677	30.03	983946	64.52
1907-08	865650	56.40	1162925	94.44
1916-17	1835145	2396.44	2855210	377.39
1920-21	723598	30.74	1620576	170.95
1932-33	750910	35.67	1364868	128.21
1935-36	718785	29.87	1333388	122.94
1937-38	753901	36.21	1464060	144.79

Source : PAR, Relevant years upto 1900.
ASBI, Relevant years, after 1900.

Cont'd.. Table 3.1

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1907-08	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase on 1907-08
LYALLPUR				
1907-08	1227135	-	1154105	-
1916-17	1381962	12.62	5385582	366.65
1920-21	1379539	12.42	5389363	366.97
1932-33	1261386	2.79	5735583	396.97
1935-36	1381098	12.55	6259643	443.92
1937-38	1390165	13.29	5772351	400.16

Note: District formed only in 1904.

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1920-21	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase on 1920-21
SHEIKHUPURA				
1920-21	530686	-	1798822	-
1932-33	746073	40.59	2116031	17.63
1935-36	743927	4018	2186184	21.53
1937-38	753711	42.03	3208154	22.76

Note: District formed only in 1919.

out the trend in the overall district - level figures. A second point that emerges is that while there were years when increase in cultivated area was more than increase in revenue these were fewer, and are likely to have preceded the years just before a fresh settlement was made, the proportion of increase in land revenue generally seems to have surpassed the increase in cultivated area. This seems to stand out all the more sharply in the case of the depression years for nearly all the districts. Despite these facts, the Land Revenue Administration Reports of the 1920s, viz, pre-Depression, drew attention to the 'ease' with which the large sum of over four crores of land revenue was collected. As a reflection of this 'light burden,' the decline in execution of cases of distress even in relatively less prosperous districts such as Gujranwala, were highlighted. Some hastened to add that the people of the province, "who pay this large sum so punctually must be essentially contented."[15]

On the question of the pitch of revenue demand again there were differences within official circles. Whereas, the Chenab Colonisation Officer, Young had insisted that it would be a grave political mistake to press the Colonist too severly, others felt that government was perfectly within its right to raise the demand after the initial years.[16] When

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15. LRARP, 1922, p.2

16. Rev. Agri. Rev., Nov. 1900, Pro 27, F 44, Chenab File,M.

the Chenab Settlement was undertaken in 1915, it was found that the revenue from Rakh Branch circle alone was "in excess of that of any district of the Province except Lyallpur itself," although the area of the circle did not exceed that of an average tahsil.[17] The increase in this circle alone was one of 258%.[18] Not surprisingly, the number of objections and appeals was higher in the circle, despite the Settlement Officer's claim that "the assessment leaves no single settler with a reasonable ground for complaint."[19]

In fact right through our period, objections to assessment proposals, far from being unknown, were fairly common. In Lahore, the time of the 1935-39 settlement, of 309 objections received, all but 15 were rejected. The official reply as in most such cases, attributing objections to discontent engineered by political agitators who, in this particular instance, were alleged to have even "distributed in the village printed forms for objections."[20]

It may be worthwhile to recall here that as far as revenue demand is concerned, the early settlements had been crucial. Many of the later settlement reports recorded that

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17. A.R., Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit, para 1, FC's Review.

18. Ibid.

19. C.S.R., op.cit., p.2

20. S.R., Lahore, 1935-39, p.9

high assessments in the early period had posed serious difficulties for the peasants. The Gujranwala settlement report for 1860, for instance, noted that "notwithstanding a reduction by Mr. Morris of 17% on the summary settlement, the assessment generally was too heavy and it has required considerable modification."[21] It was also pointed out that Mr. Morris had great impediment to overcome, and met with much opposition from the people."[22] Had the problem been merely one of high assessment, it would still have been passable, but what happened in Gujranwala was even more shocking. The Settlement Officer, Temple found that on announcement of the jamās in 1853, "the people were unwilling to enter into any engagements at all for cash payments...." and that many "refused to engage for the government revenue, mainly because of high demand."[23] Temple nonchalantly recorded that the matter was 'amicably' settled with proprietors renouncing their right to the land, and the land was 'transferred' to others. As conceded later:

> "Such resignation was in reality caused by poverty or by the pressure of the assessment, or by the prospect of balances accruing, which the proprietors felt they could not pay. So that in reality these transactions were not essentially different from

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21. S.R., Gujranwala, 1860, p.1.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p.7.

> sale or transfer for realisation of government demands,... Obviously, the effecting of such transfers through the agency and machinery of the settlement office, was not legal. There are processes which the Settlement Officer is by law empowered to use, in the event of proprietors refusing to engage for the assessed revenue, but sale is not among those processes... the result has shown subsequently that when the assessment is so reduced as to render land really valuable the people even in this district, do never wish to resign their rights and that when they become tolerably well to do, they are content to cease to agitate...[24]

In this context the officer expressed concernover how "provoking and contumacious" the people were between 1853 and 1855 and how they "almost behaved like a mob," with sometimes as circle of villages "combining to offer passive resistance to the progress of the settlement."[25]

It may be placed on record that when reductions were announced and old settlers staked their claims, the Lieutenant-Governor ruled that the 'transfers' be set aside and old owners reinstated, with new settlers being compensated elsewhere if necessary.[26]

In Gugera tahsil, Montgomery, similarly, a reduction of over Rs. 15,000 had to be announced two years after the first summary settlement in 1850. But in the course of the subsequent revised settlement the demand was scaled

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. S.R. Gujranwala, 1889-94, p. 14.

again so that the problem continued till in 1892-93 again reductions had to be announced.[27] It was observed that "with a diminishing sailāb and a demand pitched until quite recently at more than the people could pay, collections have been unusually difficult, balances chronic and, recourse to coercive measures frequent."[28] Despite this, in Pakpattan tahsil, also in Montgomery district the demand imposed in 1892 was in parts 81 per cent in excess of the previous settlement.[29]

Components of Revenue Demand

The next question that arises relates to the problem of what was the actual demand on the cultivator? What were the different heads under which the 'surplus' was appropriated from the peasant? To what extent and in what manner did this increase over the years?

Before going into the specifics of revenue demand it is necessary to note that at the beginning of the twentieth century the cultivator in the Colony tracts was perhaps as confounded by the plethora of dues as with the proportion of total demand. Further, the distinctions between these different dues were none too clear to the

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27. A.R. Gugera, Montgomery, 1894, pt.17, p.31.
28. Ibid.
29. S.R. Montgomery, 1892-99, p.81.

peasant or, at times, even to the officials. At the top of the list of heads of demand was land revenue collected from the landowner by the State; he in turn collected rent from the cultivator. On those who had not yet acquired proprietory right, mālikānā was levied; then there was the tirni or grazing tax; kirāya teh zamini, interpreted as the ground rent; there were also various cesses, viz., malbā a local rate, lambardāri dues and chaukidārānā.[30]

A large part of the income to government, however, came from irrigation receipts. These fell under three heads: (a) direct receipts resulting mainly from water rates. (b) Indirect receipts also known as water-advantage rate, nahri partā, owner's rate and so on, and (c) Extra-ordinary receipts, comprising of interest on sale proceeds of crown waste lands in those areas where fresh irrigation had been introduced.

The separation of land revenue and water revenue was a continuation of Prinsep's Scheme, devised in the 1860s during his tenure as Settlement Commissioner. Since the canal water-advantage rate was not uniform, nor fixed - it, therefore, served the purpose of securing to the state a share of the profits arising from the rapid expansion of

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30. This part of the discussion is based on information

canal irrigation.[31] Although it was levied on the land-owner, it was clear right through that if the owner's rate was Rupee 1, it practically authorised the landlord to take double that from the tenant. For this very reason, many within the government opposed the imposition of owner's rate. This opposition was based not so much on concern for the tenant as the fact that the adoption of owner's rate "amounts in practice to the endowment of the landlords with a large portion of the canal revenue."[32] Instead, a revision of water-rates, i.e., occupier's rate, from time to time, was considered proper and expedient. Interestingly, for quite some time the government of Punjab resorted to both options - viz., retention of owner's rate, as well as the periodic revision of water-rates, in 1905, 1912 and in 1924-25. After the abolition of owner's rate however, in 1912, in the Colonies, land revenue became a purely fluctuating assessment levied on the area sown.

The water-rate or occupier's rate, was the price for canal water, levied by an average rate, as per the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act, 1873. By the 1900s it was accepted that differential crop rates were to be imposed, the pitch of the rate being determined by the quality of land which was receiving the amount of water

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31. Ibid.

32. Rev. Agri. Rev., Nov. 1900, Pro. 27, F-44, Chenab File M., p.32.

ordinarily required to ripen a particular crop, and the additional value of the outturn of the crop per acre due to irrigation. This was ascertained by comparing the rents per acre paid by tenants-at-will in the same area for nahri and barani lands.[33]

Of the other dues mālikānā was collected as per the statement of conditions made at the time of allotments. This too was a rate levied per acre. Theoretically, mālikānā was to be 4% of the market value of land in its waste condition or a sum not less than half the land revenue. On the Lower Chenab Canal, however, it was fixed at 6 annas for the first ten years and 9 annas thereafter till proprietory right was attained. On the Lower Jhelum Canal mālikānā was fixed at 4 annas.[34] Lambardāri fees amounted to 5% of the land revenue in the Chenab.[35] The malbā was cess imposed by landowners on themselves to meet common village expenses incurred to maintain certain basic services. While at times the patwāri kept malbā accounts, this was not always the case, and the villagers were free to make their own arrangements.[36]

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33. Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, A, Pro-24, F. 14.
34. P.C.M., Wace, 1933, p. 187.
35. C.C.G., 1904, p. 145.
36. P.S.M., 1930, op.cit., p. 50

Thorburn discusses the origin of the cesses, highlighting that in fact cesses were devised as an indirect means of enhancing demand on the peasants. Tracing the matter back to 1871, Thorburn points out that the 'local rate' for instance had its roots in a decision whereby Punjab was asked by GOI to contribute £120,000 each year towards the famine insurance fund. This amount was to be raised from the peasantry - "they being prosperous, lightly assessed, accustomed to bear burdens without murmering and, prospectively, the chief beneficiaries from the tax."[37] However, since it was not possible to raise revenue in the middle of a settlement term :

> "the legal difficulty was surmounted by calling the enhancement a 'cess', accordingly an additional 'local rate' cess of 6% on the land revenue was legalised and levied."[38]

Thorburn maintained that :

> "its imposition was morally indefensible, and the government was roundly accused of a breach of faith. The distinction between a 'cess - a rate levied on the land revenue - and an enhancement of that revenue was explained, but such caustic refinement was incomprehensive to simple Punjabis, who did not care what the Collector might call the component parts of their rating provided that its aggregate was not raised whilst a settlement was running."[39]

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37. Thorburn, 1883, p.236.

Apart from these, officially, no cess could be levied, not even with the concurrence of the people from whom it was realised, without the previous consent of the Government of India.

However, the position with regard to cesses varied from district to district. Thus in Gujranwala district two trends were noted at the same time (a) uniformity in the cesses as a result of the settlement as compared to the old system whereby the patwāris and zaildārs were remunerated by a varying percentage on the land revenue of their circles or zails and (b) persistence of considerable variation in incidence of cess demand even in adjoining villages.[40] A later settlement report noted a decrease in cesses in this district from about 21% in 1890s to 13½ % in 1913, through abolition of patwāri cess-5%, ālā lambardāri 1% and a reduction of 1/5 in local rate.[41] Multan, on the other hand, was witness to the phenomenon of cesses "climbing up".[42] While at the first regular settlement cesses amounted to Rs. 10-2-0% of the land revenue, and Rs. 13% at the revised settlement this was later raised to Rs. 20-14-8 and by the time of the 1901 settlement these had come upto Rs. 21-10-8%.[43] Shahpur district had by 1897 recorded an increase of about 8% in cesses on the regular settlement of 18 from Rs. 19-6-8%

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40. S.R., Gujranwala, 1889-94, op.cit.
41. S.R., Gujranwala, 1913, p.34.
42. S.R., Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.32.
43. Ibid.

to Rs. 25-0-0%.[44] But in this district too the abolition of patwāri cess and famine cess in the 20th century, resulted in a reduction of cess.[45]

This apart, a gradual change that came about in the course of Colonisation in the Chenab Colony was that malbā which was a fund for common village expenses paid by all to the village headman who administered it on behalf of the rest, came to be administered by the state, and the Colonies Committee went so far as to suggest that a permissive clause be added to grants to enable government to sanction a malbā cess and that "provision for malbā ought, in the case of future Colonies, to be made in the statement of conditions."[46] Complaints were also received alleging that Colonists in many cases were not receiving payment for labour spent in silt clearance of government channels.[47] Officials took refuge under the argument that money had been disbursed but had probably failed to reach the complainants.

Tirni and kirāya tah zamini were other demands made on cultivators and other residents, which aroused widespread resentment and discontent. Of these, tirni, had its origins in Afghan rule and appears to have been retained by the Sikh rulers with the object of making professional cattle-

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44. S.R., Shahpur, 1897, p.30.

45. S.R., Shahpur, 1916, p.30.

46. C.C.R., p.760.

47. Ibid.

breeders, "who did not otherwise contribute to the expenses of the state, share in the burdens of the rest of the population. Agricultural cattle were exempt from taxation."[48] Sheep and goats, however, had always been taxed.

Unfortunately, however, the British, while taking on the earlier practice of tirni, lost sight of the real purpose behind exemption of agricultural cattle from taxation and proceeded to levy the tax on these as well. As a consequence income from tirni which in 1857-58 was a little under Rs. 32,000 had risen by 1872-73 to Rs. 1,08,009 and by 1881-82 to Rs. 1,48,000.[49] The method of collection at this time was through farming out of tirni contracts to zaildārs etc., who in turn engaged with villages on the basis of a rate per head. In the 1890s, the contract was fixed on a five-yearly basis. While officially everything seemed to have been put in order through livestock surveys and the quinquennial tirni assessment, the fact was that there were many loopholes. Thus, while officially tirni was an optional levy in effect it was not so, since under the system followed, entire villages were declared tirni-guzār or ghair-tirni-guzār.[50]

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48. C.C.G., op.cit., p.20.

49. Ibid.

50. S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.165.

The settlement report for Jhang noted that "it is compulsory and it is doubtful whether the compulsion is legitimate."[51] It was pointed out that the tax was also levied on old settlers whose villages were located within the vast area now appropriated as goverment wastes, and these settlers were being made to pay for what had originally been rightfully theirs.[52] It was much later that agricultural cattle was made exempt from tirni.

Kirāya tah zamini was similarly resented, being looked upon as "quite a new and frightful thing."[53] In their evidence before the Colonies' Committee, there were hardly any among the Colonists who did not complain about it. The levy, charged as a ground rent for house-building sites, was opposed by Colonists who argued that they should be deemed owners of the site on which they built their houses.[54] Sayad Mahdi Shah, Honorary Magistrate, Chenab Colony, further argued that artisans and menials, such as blacksmiths, weavers, mirasis, cobblers, washerman, dyers, scavengers, and others should be exempt from payment of the levy since the "founding of a village is impossible without these menials."[55] Rai Bahadur (later Sir) Ganga Ram, describing it as a "most

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51. S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.165.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, A, Pro 1-4, Answers File, p. 270.
55. Ibid.

obnoxious tax and highly distasteful," pointed to the fact that its abolition would facilitate increase in population and afford greater facilities to zamindars to harvest and put many more at their disposal for agricultural work.[56]

The tax, never levied on the Jhelum Canal, yielded an annual income of about Rs. 1 lakh on the Chenab, while its critics pointed out that in non-Colony villages proprietors did not make any such demand on their tenants.[57]

SECTION II

Policy Regarding Revenue Reassessment

A study of available assessment and settlement reports reveals that till about the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a level of complacency with regard to returns from land revenue since extension of canal irrigation to new lands itself yielded enormous returns. This is not to argue that attempts were not made at the time of settlement to raise revenue demand, but after the initial disasters of the summary settlements, the period upto 1910 was marked by a note of caution. Till then there were occasions when after a preliminary survey reassessment operations were shelved. In Sharakpur, for example, the settlement officer pressed for status quo,

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56. Ibid., p.219.

57. Ibid.

if not relief, since several estates in the region had been ruined due to "continued pressure of a revenue demand beyond their capacity."[58] The Chenab Circle of Hafizabad tahsil, Gujranwala also escaped reassessment since the district officers were insistent in pointing out that the area had not witnessed any increase in production.[59] Gugera tahsil in Montgomery could not escape an increased demand but none less than the Chief Secretary himself remarked that the assessments, "even as finally sanctioned, were higher than it was quite prudent to take" in view of its past history and the serious danger of driftage of tenants to the Chenab Colony.[60] Such comments were hardly ever forthcoming in later assessment reports.

While the advance of Colonisation ensured a fair amount of financial stability, it also raised another problem - of maintaining an ever-increasing flow of revenue returns. Settlement operations in the colonial set-up, therefore were the scene of a tussle between the state which asserted that it was losing out on heavy investments that it had made in canals; the landlord posing as the aggrieved party vis-a-vis both the tenant below and the state above him; the tenant at the other end, trying to

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58. Reassessment Survey, Sharakpur, Gujranwala, 1909.
59. Rev. Agri. Rev., October 1903, A, Pro 1, F. 40.
60. Rev. Agri. Rev., October, 1894, File 9(5).

ward off any increase in demand on him but ultimately almost always losing the battle over the surplus at best, or for survival, at worst. As is the case in any such tussle, both the state and the landlord posed as champions of the poor tenant in order to present their own case in a favourable light.

An important aspect of settlement was the scale on which revision of demand was undertaken - for, a sudden increase often came down very heavily on the peasant. On this question the Government of Punjab took a more tough position vis-a-vis even the Government of India, and successfully evaded till 1928, any limit on proportion of increase at the time of new settlement.

In a comprehensive Resolution on Land Revenue Policy, dated 16.1.1902, Government of India specifically discussed the question, whether, "save in exceptional cases, the Settlement Officer should be guided by rules preventing him from enhancing above a certain percentage." Maclagan, Revenue Secretary, was of the view that if a Settlement Officer proposed to assess above the limit the onus should be on him to prove that exceptional circumstances justified such an increase. In 1911 he again wrote to the Government of Punjab, expressing his concern at the "evils resulting from a large and sudden increase in land revenue when the economic conditions of a district or other large tract have

adapted themselves to a lower scale of assessment."[61] By this time, in many other provinces, rules had been framed, with varying degrees of definiteness and liberality, to prevent "serious hardship by deferring for a period of years the imposition of the full assessment that theoretical considerations might justify, so as to enable the revenue-payers to adjust their arrangements to the impending curtailment of their income."[62]

The Punjab Government differed. Fenton, Revenue Secretary, Punjab wrote back to Maclagan that any rule which fixed a maximum percentage of enhancement would be 'fatal' to all Colonisation schemes. He argued that these tracts had earlier been the home of nomad graziers who clustered around a few wells and, to regard the revenue assessed then as a factor determining the ultimate land revenue of the Colony was obviously a "palpable absurdity."[63] He believed that "where 10 rupees was paid before, 100 rupees would be paid without any compunction, notwithstanding that the increase was one of 1000%."[64] Others who supported him, pointing to the remittances and expansion of trade etc.,

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61. Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, Pro 36, F-17.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Rev. Agri. Rev., January 1910, Pro 48-A.

argued that Punjab hardly presented a case for "experiments in artificial restrictions in assessing the share due to government, especially since almost the whole of this prosperity was due to improvements made and maintained by the state."[65]

Reassessment at a higher rate remained one of the main instruments of increasing demand and it was only in 1928 that legislation to restrict the scale of enhancements at the time of each settlement to not more than 25% was adopted in Punjab.

In this exercise of reassessment, various methods were resorted to so as to justify an enhanced revenue demand. Reclassification of land was one such method. Whereas earlier land revenue demand was based on calculations revolving around averages, by the time the Lower Chenab Colony lands fell due for settlement, there was a change in official thinking. Whereas from the 1880s onwards assessment circles were more clearly related to adventitious factors of rainfall, irrigation and water-supply, as compared to class of soil, by 1910 it was being conceded, that even the notion of a 'fair average demand' remained questionable for :

> "it could be easily paid in an ordinary year by the peasant whose square has given him an average crop; it will be a very light demand for the man

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65. Ibid.

> whose square is above average and whose crops are good, but it will be a crushingly heavy demand for the man who has inferior land..."[66]

The Canal Colonies Committee report also recommended differential rates by land, consequently, subsequent settlements recorded greater details regarding soil variations (Chapter I, supra).

Reclassification marked an even later stage in this process, when land earlier classified in one category was moved into a higher category for purposes of assessment. The reason advanced for this was that "improvement in land had occurred through the assiduous attention of high class cultivators and the levelling up tendency induced by cooling of soil and greater stabilisation of irrigation."[67] Since reclassification generally, though not invariably, led to land moving into a higher category, it resulted in a net increase in revenue demand. Thus on the Upper Jhang Branch, the Settlement Officer recorded that giving full play to the principle of differentiation of squares had enabled him "to put the bulk of the area of certain villages which were let off too highly before into higher classes."[68] Sometimes, by this process, there was no land left in the

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66. Rev. Agri. Rev., 1909, Pro 1-4, Evidence, p. 592.

67. A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit.

68. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.23.

lowest category.[69] In Lyallpur tahsil it was observed that there was a "marked tendency of the land in the bottom classes to move up in the scale."[70] In Samundri similarly, an "upward trend" was noted resulting in an "appreciable increase" so that the highest acreage could be found in Classes I, II and III.[71]

The whole exercise however, remained a bone of contention for it was really a part of the cultivator's struggle to retain a larger share for himself, and the state's to get a higher share of the produce for itself by classifying the land as being of better quality and, therefore, producing more. That officers acted with undue haste at times becomes clear from repeated instructions given to them that "no square should be transferred for assessment purposes into a higher class until the Collector has satisfied himself at two successive quinquennial inspections that a square has really improved."[72] It was repeatedly emphasised that it was against the spirit of the Land Revenue Act to place during the currency of the new settlement any square in a class higher than that in which it will now be placed and so increase the assessment now imposed."[73] But it was

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69. Cf., A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1936, op.cit., p.23.
70. Rev. Agri, Rev., August 1914, A, Pro. 9, F.368.
71. A.R., Samundri, 1936, p.32.
72. Financial Commissioner's order on Rakh Branch Circle Sheikhupura tahsil and district. A.R..Lahore. 1939.op.cit.

precisely this injunction which perhaps led to large scale reclassification at the time of assessment itself. Even jangli chaks, usually comprising of inferior lands, were not spared and the reports while normally chiding them for their lack of industriousness, at such moments found it necessary to record that the assessment of these chaks had to be raised in recognition of the progress made by them."[74] It may be noted that 'reclassification' featured more prominently in the operations of the 1930s - at a time when cultivators were pressing for reduction of revenue demand owing to the prolonged slump.[75]

Conflict vis-a-vis reclassification however, surfaced at two levels - firstly, between landholders and the state, and secondly, amongst the landholders themselves. The Settlement Officer, Lyallpur for example, when under attack from "unkind critics", for manipulation in classification of squares, observed that infact there was opposition to the whole exercise from "proprietors of leniently assessed chaks and, generally speaking, the more influential men who happen to hold good land and who are at present not paying a full assessment."[76] They officials pointed out, often turned out

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74. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.24.

75. A.R., Lyallpur, Samundri and Toba Tek Singh Tahsils of Lyallpur district, op.cit., Passim

76. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.26.

to be the most ardent advocates of maintenance of status quo. Thus, in Lyallpur, in some chaks where all squares were previously assessed to one revenue rate, the more dominant proprietors with squares considerably above the average run of the chak pressed for imposition of a sarsari partā once again: "a feigned cloak of complete harmony in the proprietory body was put forward as justification for this course... No owner whose square is raised to a higher class will admit that it was thoroughly inspected, or that its new higher class is justified."[77] The officers advanced the plea that present classification if allowed to remain unchanged would not be in consonance with approved settlement principles for the success of the settlement lay in the "degree of fairness with which the demand is distributed over holdings."[78] Problems however remained on this count. As noted at one point, reassessment could be used to raise the pitch of demand but it "did not remove the inequalities of assessment between estates."[79] This was illustrated by the fact that a number of Rakh Branch estates were assessed in 1912 at

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77. Ibid., p.24.

78. Ibid., p.23.

79. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.24.

at Class III rates while Jhang Branch chaks similarly circumstanced were assessed in 1921 at Class II or even Class I rates.[80]

The village survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman shows that the land revenue in the village till 1911 was eight annas per acre. Adding to it the other dues, for water etc. the total demand per acre worked out to Rs. 2-4-0. In 1925-26 the land revenue demand alone was Rs. 5-0-8 - while the total demand was Rs. 10-10-0 indicating that while at the beginning of the century land revenue was a very small component of total demand, by 1926 the proportion of land revenue in total demand has gone up considerably.[81] The survey also recorded that while earlier land was only categorised as barani or nahri, in 1921 classification by soil was also adopted.[82]

In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, the incidence per cultivated acre of fixed land revenue increased from Rs. 0-5-3 to Rs. 1-3-5 between 1853 and 1912-13. In 1925-26 however the records showed a decline with incidence per acre coming

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80. Ibid.

81. BEIP, P.V.S. 4, 1932, pp.67-68.

82. Ibid.

to only 0-14-2 this fall being attributed to an alteration in the method of assessment" rather than a reduction in demand.[83] The fluctuating revenue, for irrigation rose from a total amount of Rs.61-0-0 in 1912-13 recording an all-time high of Rs. 249-6-0 in 1921-22, being Rs. 103-11-0 in 1925-26."[84]

It was with this in mind that differential land revenue and occupiers' rates were adopted from 1910 onwards. We give below (Table 3.2) the rates adopted on the Lower Chenab Canal in the first round of settlement nd those adopted in the 1930s for the Lyallpur district tahsils which also included some of the earlier circles.

Table 3.2

Rates by Class of Land - 1924 and 1940
Lyallpur District

	1924	1940
Class I	6-0-0	7- 8-0
Class II	5-8-0	6-12-0
Class III A	5-0-0	6- 0-0
Class III B	4-8-0	5- 8-0
Class IV A	4-0-0	4-12-0
Class IV B	3-8-0	4- 4-0
Class V A	3-0-0	3- 8-0
Class V B	2-8-0	3- 0-0
Class VI	2-0-0	2- 4-0

Source : 1. A.R.Lyallpur, p.24.
2. A.R.Samundi, p.34.
3. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, p.24

Calendar of Revenue Payment

Another aspect that needs to be looked into is the timing of revenue instalments. Government maintained that local authorities exercised flexibility in the timing of revenue payment viz., the kharif instalment was to be paid in the month of January or February, and the rabi in June or July. The exact dates were announced by the Tahsildār who was bound to give at least one month's notice. The village survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman testifies that when questioned about this the cultivators expressed the opinion that for kharif payments any date after the middle of February was more suitable while for Rabi the first or second week of July was better, for otherwise there was no time to take the wheat to the market. Flexibility regarding the date was also desirable since the convenience of the cultivator depended largely on the harvest. Thus in a year of a good cotton crop, the kharif instalment in January could be paid with relative ease whereas in a bad cotton year when the cultivators dependence on toriā to pay revenue increased, a date in the middle of February might have been more convenient.[85]

In contrast to this opinion expressed by the cultivators and endorsed by the investigator, between 1918-19 and 1926-27, in 4 harvests out of 9 kharif payment had

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85. BEIP, P.V.S., 4, op.cit., p.70.

been due and collected before the 15th of January, in two years in the latter half of January, while in the remaining three also payments had been due before the 14th of February - in contrast with the opinion expressed in favour of kharif instalment being due after mid-February. In the case of Rabi out of 8 harvests for which details were available, 6 years payments had been made in the month of June and the other two on the first and second days of July as against the first or second week of July preferred by the cultivators.[86]

That the grievance of the cultivators was not entirely baseless was supported by the comments of the Deputy Commissioner Lahore Division. Confessing to the problem faced in collecting the rabi demand he wrote that the reason perhaps was that the "period between the harvesting of the rabi and the date fixed for payment of revenue is not sufficient to allow the zamindars to dispose of their wheat properly..."[87] He, however, also felt that in the case of the kharif, it was perhaps the other way round which provided baniās with an opportunity to take away the produce even before the state demand was met.[88] He accepted that to "insist upon payments before the

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86. Ibid.

87. LRARP. 1901, p.1 (extracts from district reports).

88. Ibid.

revenue payers have had ample time to arrange for them inflicts hardship."[89] The importance of the harvest calendar, and the revenue gist or instalment with regard to its impact on the peasantry has been highlighted in a recent study of peasant production in Colonial India with respect to sugarcane cultivation in Gorakhpur district in the United Provinces.[90] Amin draws attention to the complex relationship between the peasantry and their harvest cycle, the compulsion to seasonal borrowing in view of their low absolute sum of cash income which was inadequate to meet the requirements of foodgrains, seed and cash for rent, the rigidity of the timing of revenue payment struck particularly hard in such circumstances. Amin rightly emphasises that:

> the function of money as a means of payment on a particular date was the vantage point for the penetration of usurious capital.[91]

Canal/Non-Canal Lands

Another harsh fact of Colonisation was the impact canal irrigation had on those lands which were not provided with canal water to begin with. The importance attached to irrigation and its price in a way led to neglect of those lands which were not getting water and,

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89. Ibid.

90. Amin, S., 1985, op.cit., pp.69 ff.

91. Ibid., p.80.

therefore, not paying for it. Contrary to general impressions in many such instances, the incidence of revenue demand actually went up in the face of decline in quantity and value of the produce:

> the people have gradually devoted more and more attention to their valuable canal crops and neglected the cultivation of the uncommanded land with the result that in many villages the incidence of the portion of the village has become absurdly high.92

The assessment report for Deg Circle, Gugera tahsil, Montgomery, focussed attention on the non-Colony tracts in the early period. The tenants in this case had left for more prosperous tracts, consequently the villages were increasingly becoming "over-assessed". Here it was found that "revenue was collected" with difficulty. At times proprietors themselves worked as labourers on the neighbouring canal tracts, very often coercive proceedings were started and the settlement officer concluded that while there was very little scope for enhancement at reassessment, "in some villages reductions are urgently required".[93] Even so, when the settlement was announced, Douie, Chief Secretary, found that the revenue demand sanctioned was "higher than it was quite prudent to take in view of the past revenue history of

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92. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1908, A.Pro.17, F.10.

93. A.R., Gugera, Montgomery 1894, op.cit., p.15.

the tahsil the character of the agricultural population, and the serious danger of driftage of tenants from the well lands to the Chenab Canal..."[94]

In Gujranwala, the 1906 settlement report gave the following figures for the average incidence on matured area.

Table 3.3

Average Incidence on Matured Area, in Different Circles 1900 to 1903

	Average incidence per acre	Variation in village incidence
1. Bar, Canal-irrigated	0-10-10	0-4-2 to 1-3-8
2. Bar, non-canal-irrigated	1-3-10	0-12-5 to 2-10-6
3. Bangar, Canal-irrigated	1-2-3	0-6-0 to 1-12-9
4. Bangar, non-canal-irrigated	1-9-66	1-3-9 to 4-4-6
5. Chenab Circle	1-7-66	-

Source: S.R. Gujranwala, 1906, p.7

The report mentioned that many objections were received to the assessment proposals but hardly any entertained. This state of affairs seems to have continued till about the late 1920s, when the settlement officer was specifically instructed to "shift the burden from those who were no longer able to bear it to those who had

94. Ibid.

prospered greatly."[95] The way in which this was to be achieved was by lowering the rates for chahi and barani lands and raising the assessment on nahri crops.

Section III - Standard of Assessment: Theory and Practice

What was the basis on which land revenue was assessed in the first place? What considerations were influential in fixing the demands? The standard of assessment of land revenue was a fixed proportion of the net produce or net assets. In the 1870s Egerton, Financial Commissioner had advocated the use of gross assets or gross produce to calculate the revenue demand. However, the use of net assets as the basis of assessing revenue came to be the established practice. In the course of instructions issued by Government of India in 1893 and again in 1914, it was clarified that net assets referred to "the average surplus which the estate may yield after deduction of the expenses of cultivation".[96]

Any income which the proprietors derived from the "spontaneous products of their waste and uncultivated lands and, strictly speaking any dues of whatever sort which they get in their capacity of landowners", was included in the "net assets".[97]

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95. S.R. Gujranwala, 1927.

96. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1893, A.Pro.21, F-100 of 1892. Revised draft of Assessment Instructions.

97. Ibid.

While this definition was generally acceptable, the problem that remained was one of establishing how net assets were to be calculated. As per the instructions it was clarified that "a full, fair rent paid by a tenant-at-will, though sometimes falling short of the net assets may, generally in practice and for purposes of assessment be taken as a sufficiently near approximation to them on the land for which it is paid..."[98]

Since so much depended on the calculation of net assets, the settlement officer was entrusted with the duty of framing the "most careful estimate" possible of net assets and it was categorically stated that to manipulate the estimate in any way with a view to diminish the divergence between it and the proposed demand was "tantamount to dishonesty".[99] All the assessment reports consequently, devote considerable attention to this task of calculating 'net assets' and a land revenue demand based on "half net assets".

The pressure exercised by the provincial government on the district officers in this matter was not to be ignored. Thus in his comment on the report for the Upper Jhang Branch, Lower Chenab Colony, the Lieutenant Governor chastised the officers for the,

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98. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1892, A.Pro.17, F.100.

99. P.S.M., op.cit., p.168.

> almost heroic efforts which the assessing officers have made to keep down the produce estimate

attributing it to the old problem of:

> a settlement officer animated by the fullest sympathy for his landholders, adjusting his estimates unconsciously in order to suit the assessment which he thinks he can take. It is a practice which has been strongly denounced by the Punjab Government since 1889 and, I can only hope that the Financial Commissioner will see to it that it is not revived again...[100]

Till 1928, the principle of half-net assets remained the bulwark of assessment policy. All other questions such as proportion of enhancement etc. were considered of secondary importance. The Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act III of 1928, however, laid down guidelines for the amount of enhancement permissible, the period of settlement etc. More important, however, was the fact that the Act "lowered the maximum standard of assessment from one-half of net assets to one fourth."[101] It also limited the "increase permissible in any assessment circle to 25 per cent, over the former assessment, except where canal irrigation has been introduced since the last assessment was imposed."[102] At the same time, the period of assessment was fixed at 40 years, except in undeveloped tracts.[103]

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100. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit., p.30.

101. P.S.M., op.cit., p.46.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

The second problem, related to the fact that cash rents formed the basis of calculating the net assets of a landowner. It was widely accepted that cash rents fulfilled the criterion of competitive rents. However, for a large part of Colony land leased to tenants, rents were produce rents fixed in quantity and in such cases calculations became difficult on account of variations in prices over a period of years. For produce rents fixed as a share of the crop also the problem came up since the quality of value of crop, quantity and price, all three were variable. Government accepted that in most districts of Punjab "difficulties of this latter kind are met with".[104] It further found itself making hypothetical calculations in the case of petty proprietors. At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that cash rents were primarily paid by tenants-at-will, who invariably paid higher rents.[105] In such a situation it is clear that with calculation of half-net assets on the basis of an average derived from cash rents, those landowners holding better quality land offering higher outturn stood to gain vis-a-vis government. Whether this benefit trickled down to the tenants will be discussed later.

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104. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1893, A.Pro.21, F.100. Revised Draft of Assessment Instruction for the Punjab.

105. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1892, A.Pro.1-7, F.100, Enclosure A.

Many pointed out that calculation of net assets on the basis of cash rents was full of hazards:

> As cash rents are practically non-existent, the rental has to be calculated from a valuation of the produce rents which are found to be paid by tenants-at-will in this district on 59 per cent of the total area of cultivation. The calculation is an exceedingly difficult one, and at every step assumptions have to be made on the correctness of which the reliability of the whole account depends. These assumptions, moreover, are based on no very secure foundations as it is necessary to reduce to an average which can be included in the account conditions which in themselves are difficult to ascertain and which vary from year to year and season to season.[106]

A similar sentiment was conveyed by Government of India to Government of Punjab at the time the first round of settlements on the Lower Chenab Canal was on. The Revenue Secretary, Government of India, wrote to Punjab, pointing out that:

> less than 4 per cent of the total cultivated area of the tract is let on a fixed cash rent, and that the estimate of Rs.200 as the average rent of a square is based on the rents recorded for this small proportion of the total area. In provinces where cash rents are more common than in the Punjab, it is recognised that it is very unsafe to assume that correct deductions can be drawn from competition rents paid over small areas, and cash rents paid by tenants-at-will are, therefore, dealt with very cautiously... Where the cash rented area is so small as in the Colonies, it will almost certainly be found that the worst lands for the lands that are most disadvantageously situated in regard to water-supply, or in other respects, are not taken up on cash rents at all. The assumption that the high rents paid on a twenty-fifth of the whole area can be used for the

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106. S.R. Jhang, 1906, op.cit., p.18.

> valuation of the rest is dangerous, and the Government of India are unable to accept it even as an estimate in calculations affecting the assessment of the tract as a whole.[107]

Even when it came to areas that were paying cash rents, it was not necessary that the net assets assumed for assessment purposes represented the actual situation. In Lyallpur district for instance the circle rate per cultivated acre for purposes of assessment was much above the existing cash rent rate on Jangli chaks:

Table 3.4

Net Assets on Janglie and Other Chaks

Tahsil/Circle	1/4 net assets per cultivated acre on select cash rents Rs. A. Ps.	Same, for Jangli chaks only Rs. A. Ps.	Circle rate per cultivated acre on new demand finally imposed Rs. A. Ps.
Lyallpur	7-0-7	5-6-8	6-6-1
Samundri	5-14-4	5-2-9	5-14-10
Toba Tek Singh	5-9-0	4-7-3	5-1-5
Jaranwala	6-5-8	-	6-7-0
New Extensions	2-11-0	-	4-6-4
Rakh Branch (in Sheikhupura)	5-15-0	5-4-10	5-9-3

Source: S.R., Lyallpur, 1940, op.cit., p.29.

Table III.5 gives the results of assets calculation for different circles on the basis of different estimates. In every case the cash rent basis yields a higher estimate.

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107. Rev.Agri.Rev., July 1909, A.Pro.44-45.

Table: 3.5

NET ASSETS ESTIMATES ON DIFFERENT BASIS:

a. Gugera Branch I:

	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Nahri, Half Net Assets by Produce Estimate	4	3	7
2. -do- Cash Rents	4	8	0
3. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	11	2

Source: A.R., Gugera Branch I, L.C.C., 1911.

b. Upper Jhang Branch:

1. Half Net assets by kind rents on maturedarea in 1908-09	3	10	0
2. Half Net assets by Cash Rents on maturedarea in 1908-09	4	7	0
3. Half Net Assets by cash Rents on maturedarea between 1902-10	4	9	8
4. Half Net Assets by kind Rents as calculated by Financial Commissioner	3	10	6
5. Half Net Assets by cash Rents as calculated by Financial Commissioner	4	6	10
6. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	2	1

Source: A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, L.C.C., 1911.

c. Jhang Branch I, II and III:

	J.B. I	J.B.II	J.B:III
1. Half Net assets by kind rents	3 10 0	3 1 3	2 14 6
2. Half Net Assets by cash rents for 5 years	4 9 8	3 5 6	3 0 2
3. Half Net Assets by cash rents in 1909-10	-	4 1 6	3 8 0
4. One-sixth value of gross produce	3 2 1	2 15 6	2 13 9

Source: A.R., Jhang Branch III, L.C.C., 1911.

d. GUJERA BRANCH II:

1. Half Net assets by kind Rents	4	3	8
2. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1905-06	3	14	5
3. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1909-10	6	1	3
4. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1910-11	7	12	3
5. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	7	2

Source: A.R., Gugera Branch II, L.C.C., 1912.

Cont'd.. Table 3 .5

e. Rakh Branch:

	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Half Net assets on matured area by kind rents	6	0	8
2. Half Net assets on sown area	5	9	6
3. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rent 1909-10	6	4	1
4. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rents 1910-11	6	4	3
5. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rents 1911-12	7	4	1
6. One-sixth value of gross produce	4	12	10

Source: A.R., Rakh Branch, L.C.C., 1913.

This is likely to result from the estimates being based on cash rents on the best lands. As in the case of the Jangli tracts referred to in the above table, the results based on rental returns on land other than the best are likely to have been lower. But these obviously did not form the basis of estimates since, as emphasised, the idea was to derive estimates on the basis of "competition rates".

Yields formed an important aspect of calculation of net assets. Thus it was found that in Lahore district, for instance, "in all cases yield assumed for calculation of net assets on nahri land has gone up".[108] The settlement officer, Lyallpur, admitted that the high yield estimates assumed at last settlement in both Toba Tek Singh and Samundri tahsils had proved to be an instance of "belied hope".[109] In Toba Tek Singh while cotton yields on lands possessed by good Arain cultivators were 6 maunds per acre, and only 4 maunds in most of the tail villages, the settlement officer assumed a yield of 5 maunds.[110] Table 3.6 gives the yields assumed for the four tahsils in Lyallpur district.

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108. A.R. Lahore, 1939, op.cit., p.17.

109. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.23.

110. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.16.

Table 3.6

Yields Assumed in 4 Tahsils of Lyallpur District

Commodity	Jaranwala Mds.	Lyallpur Mds.	Samundri Mds.	Toba Tek Singh Mds.
Sugarcane	25	25 (30)	23	20
Cotton:				
American	6½	6½	6	5
Desi	6½	6½	6	5
Maize	14	14	13	12
Wheat	14	14	13½	12
Toria	8	8	7½	6
Gram	11	11	10	9

Source: A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1937, p.18.

Revenue - Price Nexus

All the while, that land assessment was being successfully revised, there were two assumptions the Punjab government was basing itself on:

(a) extension of irrigation and the fact that an irrigated area yielded a higher produce in addition to ensuring security of agriculture.

(b) a continuous rise in prices - in fact the existence of boom level prices - affected, among other things by improvement in communications.

These two factors influenced the understanding evolved in the Colony tracts, of assuming both, a higher quantity of outturn and, a higher value of crops.

However, it was precisely in these two spheres that the cracks began to appear. While the position regarding irrigation will be discussed in the next section, we examine here the revenue-rising prices nexus. Which was exemplified in the sliding scale system adopted as a basis for the post-depression settlements.

Firstly, it was ironical that the sliding scale-oriented to a situation of rising prices - was drawn up at a time when the rural economy was yet to recover from the devastation of the depression years. The scale, evolved with the intention of facilitating adjustment of demand with prices highlighted what government had in any case pinned its hopes on for the last three decades - i.e. the 'price boom'. The fact that in the mid-1930s the 'boom' seemed more like a bubble did not deter the government from its optimism. Since the proposed settlement was to be for a period of forty years the only 'concession' made was to defer the application of the new scale till such time as 'prices were back to normal".[111]

Although the sliding scale was not applied in the course of the period being studied, nevertheless it throws light on questions being examined here. An essential feature of the new scale was the drawing up of a full demand - equivalent to 100 in index numbers, which would be collected in a year of normal prices. Normal

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111. A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

price was for this purpose construed as correspondence of the general level of market prices for the whole year with the level of commutation prices. Commutation prices, in turn, were worked on the basis of an average of forty years. By government's own admission, the sliding scale "necessarily involved assumption of comparatively high commutation prices;"[112] This was despite settlement officers being told to guard against a common weakness which led to attribution of "a greater degree of stability" to existing conditions than they actually possessed; it was accepted that in the case of prices one was "apt to assume a permanent rise or a permanent fall, and it is quite possible to mistake the effects of short harvests for those of extended markets."[113] In this context, 'short harvests' referred to the depression years. The fact that the effects of the depression extended far beyond that of 'short harvests' in scale or dimension was conveniently lost sight of. This apart, it was emphasised that if prices fell, the system was geared to giving relief automatically - through comparison of the index figure for the previous year with the standard index figure. The standard index figure in turn was a multiple of (a) the percentage of specific crops on total per holding. (b) outturn in maunds and (c) commutation prices in annas per maund.[114]

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112. Ibid., p.27.

113. P.S.M., op.cit.

114. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.27.

The government hoped to achieve two primary objectives with the introduction of the sliding scale. Firstly, the adjustment of land revenue to existing conditions with provision for giving relief as and when considered necessary; secondly, to ensure for itself a sizeable share of economic benefit as and when prices rose again. To that end the sliding scale as a basis of revenue assessment was definitely an advance on the previous system. It approximated a balance between a fixed and fluctuating demand on a more rational basis. However, what is more important at this point is the discussion revolving around the introduction of the sliding scale - for this brings into focus the true nature of the 'concessions' and 'liberality' that government continually boasted of.

First, the concession: Presumably in keeping with its earlier pronouncements and show of leniency even as re-assessment operations were being completed, it was announced that:

> for five years with effect from the harvest in which the new assessment is introduced, they (it) will not take more than the current demand gives even if under the sliding scale system it is permissible to take more.[115]

This show of magnanimity government hoped, would assist recovery in the even of prices rising. For an

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115. Ibid., pro.3, p.2.

imperial government this appeared to be the supreme sacrifice - 'loss' of revenue that it had a right to claim by non-implementation of the new scale and assessment. It was proudly announced that if there was a sudden and high rise in prices during these five years for which implementation of the new settlement was being deferred:

> government will forego the full benefit to which they would otherwise be entitled, so that an abrupt and large increase in the government demand will not immediately follow the period of acute depression.[116]

Report after report, this heavily loaded proclamation of charity was splashed across the pages.

Whereas, the loss being bemoaned was actually only a hypothetical loss - from an expected rise in prices. What is more, behind this hypothetical loss lay hidden the harsh reality that given the prevailing price situation, had the new scale been implemented the government would be entitled to collect far below what it had actually collected. The same reports admitted that:

> As long as prices remain at the present level the new system will involve government in a substantial loss on the revenue which government is entitled to collect in the current settlement; the loss will of course vary with the level of prices...[117]

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116. Ibid.

117. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.38.

In fact, while government was bemoaning these hypothetical losses, it was actually taking more from the cultivator than would have been its due under the new settlement on the basis of the sliding scale. Thus the Samundri report categorically stated:

> Had the new settlement been in force during these five years (1931-32 to 1935-36), the revenue payers would have had to pay Rs.18,91,298 in all less than they were called upon to pay, representing an average of about Rs.3,78,260 less per annum. The net demand recoverable would have been Rs.48,08,398 as against the assessable demand under the existing assessment of Rs.77,59,097 representing a decrease of approximately 38 per cent.[118]

The report went on to say that since the current index figure worked out to only 53.4 per cent of the standard index figure which meant that had the new settlement been in force, cultivators would have had to pay 21.2 per cent less than what they had actually paid.

The Lyallpur tahsil report provides a similar example. In 1934-35 alone cultivators would have been entitled to 55 per cent remissions on the new demand, viz., they would have "gained by nearly 4,00,000 in this one year alone had the new settlement been in force."[119] In Toba Tek Singh tahsil the new scale would have

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118. Ibid.

119. A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

involved a remission of 45.7 per cent in the same year and "revenue payers would have had to pay Rs. 17,31,670 in all less than they were called upon to pay."[120]

In other words, postponement of the new settlement was based on the realisation that, given low prices, demand would have to be scaled down. Meanwhile, government felt cheated - because its expectations had been aroused by the preceding high prices; i.e., the 'loss' was actually no more than denial of an expected gain.

At the other end was the cultivator who felt crushed under the burden and, therefore, recoiled at the very thought of reassessment. Justifiably so since government's efforts to allay his fears that a revised scale would be lenient were meaningless in the face of his actual experience. More so when government's benign postures went hand in hand with tongue in cheek statements: which pointed out "how extremely generous the new system is and should remove any doubts as to the benefit which it will confer on the zamindars";[121] and sought to back it up by the claim that in the last five years, "no serious difficulty was experienced by government in collecting a demand 16½ lakhs in (one tahsil) excess of

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120. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.29.

121. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

what would have been permissible had the sliding scale system been in force."[122]

While not overemphasising the point made above we will only add that of late efforts have been made to examine the more subtle features of colonial rule. We have no disagreement with those working in this direction. We only wish to reiterate that these subtleties were not necessarily at cross purposes with more blatant forms of exploitation. The experience of Punjab in the depression years particularly highlights this aspect of the Raj. The rapid increase of demand in the previous years hit all sections of the rural population in the difficult years, but was particularly disastrous for the smaller peasants.

Not surprisingly, government encountered resistance to the pitch of demand and the oasis of assessment. Consequently in the 1920s, there was talk of devising a mechanism to entertain complaints regarding land revenue. A suggestion to publicise the proposals for re-settlement of land revenue so as to afford the persons affected an opportunity to raise objections before final orders were passed was considered. This met with resistance from several officers of the Revenue Department, Punjab, who argued that such a step assumed that "the settlement

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122. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.38.

officer's proposals on which orders are passed are made without a full opportunity to all concerned of urging their views up on him", and raised questions regarding the role of the revenues bureaucracy in a colonial state.[123] The settlement officer, it was pointed out, "stands as an arbiter between the revenue payers and the Government, and his proposals must contain his considered replies to possible objections by the people that he is taking too much or by the government that he is taking too little..."[124]

In the face of the imperial government's insistence that such a procedure be tried out, the Lieutenant-Governor and the Revenue Secretary, Punjab, conveyed their belief that such a step "would not really modify the situation in any manner other than increasing the small number of objections at present usually attending a Punjab settlement".[125] Ultimately Government of India's wish prevailed, and Punjab officials accepted it with the cryptic comment that this step would,

> remove the objections of those who from one motive or other, are disposed to criticise the actions of government and are glad to have an opportunity of posing as the champions of the agriculturists and, as Punjab experience in 1907 and 1913 showed, endeavour to arouse in them a sense of grievance which might embarrass government.[126]

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123. Rev.Agri.Rev., Jan.1920,A.Pro.32,F.252,of1917,p.57.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.

Section IV - Water Management and the Canal Bureaucracy

We now turn to the system of canal water management. Government laid stress on close and continuous control by expert irrigation officers on distribution of the supply in all large irrigated works. These officers were expected to keep a strict account of every cubic foot of water entering their canals; the idea being that this strict vigil would prevent unequal or ineffective distribution of the supply and localize wasteful expenditures. Further, it would ensure to the government strict accounting of every pie that was 'due' to it in return for this stupendous achievement.

In this context it is interesting that while the Irrigation Commission and every report, official or semi-official, emphasised the need for strict accounting of every drop of water that trickled on to the field, no detailed roster of record of rights in irrigation at the time of annexation was made in the course of the early settlements. The settlement report for Multan district, 1901, described at length the inundation canals made by proprietors themselves in pre-annexation days; and the watercourses to private lands constructed by individuals with the permission of the ruler. The individual who constructed these water courses was as much their owner as the constructor of a well was its owner, and could

dispose of the water as he pleased, could put up dams and jhālars and even sell the whole or a part of the right to irrigation from the watercourse. These rights were, however, subject to orders from the ruler or other local powerful men who drew favour from the ruler. No doubt, given the state of affairs, incessant conflict prevailed regarding the distribution of water. While the officers drew up detailed statements of water-courses in existence and so on, they studiously refrained from making any record of irrigation rights. The extra Assistant Commissioner Multan district in 1860 himself party to such an exercise, outlined 3 major factors for this (a) that it may stir up unnecessary disputes (b) to avoid stereotyping transitory disputes and (c) to avoid placing on record anything which may curb the power of distributing water that was vested in the canal officer with the passing of the Canal Act in 1873.[127]

In the years to come official opinion made clear its disapproval of private initiative in canal-building. In a note submitted to the Irrigation Commission, Wilson wrote that he was "not in favour of encouraging private persons to construct further canals"; he found that their management was "rarely" satisfactory and that it was in

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127. S.R. Multan, 1901, p.41.

the interest of landowners that "government should make the canals and have complete control over them", construction of private canals should be allowed only when government was not prepared to build it and there too, "government should have full power to step in and assume the management whenever it thought proper".[128] Another question which soon came up was that of compensation to owners of private canals. The compensation due was actually on two counts. Firstly, on account of diminution of supply in the canals and secondly, on account of loss of income from land, i.e., in their capacity as canal owners as well as land owners.

Discussion on the nature and amount of compensation began soon after Colonisation was extended to regions covered by private canals, mainly revolving around the provisions of the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act. The matter remained a ticklish one, with government initially wanting to acquire the canals and canal-owners resisting it. When it was decided that private ownership would stay the compensation could not be decided on. Matters were complicated by the fact of claims, if any of those who did not own the canals, but had some rights to their water, with or without payment.[129] While differences continued on all these aspects, it was decided that

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128. IIC, App., p.42.

129. Rev.Agri.Rev., December 1909, A.Pro.62-67, F.70.

one form of compensation would be lease of land on proprietary terms in the Colony tracts. The debate continued and it was finally decided that claims for compensation would be settled as and when they came up.[130]

As pointed out in Chapter I above, official policy was to discourage construction of private canals once its own network of perennial canals began to spread. This was justified by drawing attention to the 'utter mismanagement' prevailing on private canals,[131] but there can be no doubt that the primary reason for this was government's wish to exercise greater control over water resources. The Punjab government was being pushed into recognising "the necessity of increasing the influence of the district officer in this matter".[132] The Collector, it was specified, should "have a weighty voice in a matter of such vital importance to the raiyat as the supply and distribution of irrigation water".[133]

With respect to the state owned canals, to begin with, only the main canal was maintained by government and there was nothing in the shape of rajbahās to bring water to the door of the irrigation. The landlords had to make their own arrangement to bring water from the canal,

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130. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1909, A.Pro.4-5.

131. IIC., Appendix, Evidence, Punjab, p.21.

132. Rev.Agri.Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.50-51.

133. Ibid.

however far it may be from his holding; the rich ones, consequently made their own watercourses, while the others combined with thier neighbours, or even perhaps with the rest of the village, to build a joint water-course. As a result, often, there were a number of these watercourses - running parallel and independent - for long distances from the canals. Each of these had to be cleaned out annually and as the spoil banks became higher cost of clearing increased. It was only on later branches that the Irrigation Department constructed watercourses leading to each square.

The limit of the area supplied with water from the canal was defined by an artifical line, known as the irrigation boundary, usually a natural drainage beyond which it was inexpedient or impossible for canal water to pass by gravitation but not co-terminous with village boundaries. The irrigation boundary performed the important function of prescribing the limits to which the canal Department was confined as an assessing agency, beyond which the district revenue staff were responsible for the assessment. Similarly, branches, distributaries, village water courses also had irrigation boundaries.[134]

In order to cope with the organisational aspect of maintaining canals, Colony tracts were divided into

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134. CSR, op.cit., p.23.

canal divisions, approximately 60 miles long and 20 miles broad, comprising 500 miles of government channels and utilizing a designed discharge of 1,500 cusecs to be distributed through 1,500 outlets.[135]

The major factors influencing water allotments were as follows: (a) discharge factor for the channel, (b) condition of channel (c) allotted area on the outlet (d) hagg percentage (e) permissible percentage (f) command of water (g) nature of soil whether level, uneven, broken etc. (h) nature of soil - whether sandy, containing salts etc. (j) per cent of irrigation actually done.[136]

Distribution was through outlets fixed in the distributaries and each outlet served no more than one village, though there could be more than one outlet on a distributary. The area irrigated by an outlet was referred to as a chak which generally comprised of thirty squares but never more than forty. The discharge on a watercourse was generally one to three cubic feet per second. However, it was found that to irrigate every square simultaneously would be wasteful and ineffective. A more effective method was found in the 'wāribandi' or practise of turning the supply on to each square by turns commencing from the squares at the head of the watercourse.

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135. Spate, op.cit., p.470

136. Ibid.

If for some reason the wāri was interrupted, it recommended from where the stoppage had occurred. On the Chenab Canal the duration of the wāri was fixed in proportion to the area of land held; each wāri was from 2 to 4 pehars each or 6 to 12 hours, once in 10 days. In case of dispute the zilladār or the Executive Engineer made out a wāribandi in consultation with the people, which was signed by the settlers and water distributed accordingly. This too did not always work smoothly as is obvious from the Superintending Engineer's statement that in exceptional cases, for instance, if the time for sowing was nearly over and a man had not been able to sow his full area, or the Executive Engineer took a decision to this effect.[137] Apart from the peasants one square's turn was allowed for tanks and trees, and half a square's turn for plantation owners in each village.

On the Lower Jhelum Canal the cultivators arranged the periods for which water was due according to the mares they had to maintain; also, in some cases, according to the squares they possessed. The period was ideally proportionable to the total number of mares or squares covered by an outlet. Thus if there were thirty mares in a chak and one man possessed two, his turn would be for 2/30 of 10 days, that is two-thirds of one day if ten

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137. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers, p.33.

days were taken as the unit, or 14/30 of a day if a week was taken as a unit. In proprietory villages it was customary to fix the wāris on the total number of acres each cultivator possessed.[138]

In order to prevent waste by water flowing off, the zamindars had to resort to kiārābandi - or partition in the field. Infringement of this rule was punishable under the Canal Act of 1873.

In Kala Gaddi Thamman, Lyallpur, the Colonists receiving water from the two large outlets co-operated - they had arranged for watch and bell which was kept with the Gurdwara priest who announced with a ring when one turn was over and the other began. No case was noticed of a cultivator selling his water turn to another : It was felt that such an act was entirely against the general sentiments of the people, though exchanges of whole or part of wāris were not uncommon. There were instances of a cultivator taking more than his share, which frequently was the cause of a dispute. Disputes were generally resolved by a committee of 4 or 5 cultivators who intervened in order to see that justice was done. The village survey noted that if the defaulter refused to give back the extra water,

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138. Ibid., Reply by C.H.A. Muller, Ex. Engineer Lower Jhelum Canal, p.85.

other members also took extra water as in one case in this village when the wāri per square rose from 4 to 9 pehers - till the zillādār brought about a settlement.[139]

Early in the history of irrigation in the Punjab the designers proposed to irrigate during the year every acre commanded, i.e. a 100% intensity of irrigation of cultivated land. However, as the earliest canals came to be plagued with waterlogging, general opinion favoured a supply sufficient to irrigate one-third of the area. Subsequently, the Lower Jhelum Canal was designed with a proposed intensity of 50%. It was hoped that even if the cultivators spread this allowance as much as they could manage to, waterlogging could be avoided. The matter however, could not be solved so easily. This was one of the questions that figured prominently in the discussions, questions and evidence related to the Canal Colonies' Committee, 1907. The Committee set about collecting responses to the official contention - whether a 'permissible area' of 75% of which 45% was for rabi was sufficient to secure prosperity amongst the cultivators of a tract in which rain crops were of negligible extent and the holdings, in some cases, as small as half a square.[140] The answer from almost all the Superintending and Executive Engineers

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139. BEIP., PVS 4, op.cit., p.49.

140. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, A, Pro 1-4, Special Questions, p.16.

on the various canals, was that 75 per cent permissible area was sufficient. Referring to a petition made by one Dalip Singh and 86 other peasants, the Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle, argued that what was 'insufficient' in the eyes of the peasants was insufficient only in terms of the peasants' desire for 'excessive irrigation'. If excessive irrigation were to continue, subsoil water would rise rapidly leading to soil deterioration.[141] The Executive Engineer, Jhang Division, Lower Chenab Canal, was of the opinion that the reduction of permissible area though necessary, would be difficult, since the grantees and tenants had become accustomed to that much water and to a mode of life based on that assumption.[142]

The Multan settlement report made a special note of the changes that were coming about which, "entail a great deal of interference by government that was unknown before, both in canal and in revenue matters..." and advised caution, "while the people are still unaccustomed to and, prejudiced against, the change of system."[143]

Official reaction was similarly strong in response to a further question that the Committee put as to whether

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141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. S.R.Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.35.

the haqq area originally fixed should be maintained? It may be explained that haqq referred to the area peasants had a right to irrigate while 'permissible area' was the maximum they were permitted to irrigate. On the Lower Chenab Canal, while permissible area as stated earlier, was 75 per cent, haqq had been fixed at 66 per cent.[144] The Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle, however, objected to the use of both the terms: "Permissible implies and originally meant that it is the maximum permissible limit whereas it is now intended by government to work up and down to this standard", he said while haqq was objectionable since, "government was not legally bound to supply water for any definite area."[145] He wanted the term haqq to be dropped and the words "area intended to be irrigated annually", to be substituted for permissible area; there were others who thought that haqq ought to be used while 'permissible area' should be dropped since it tended to create problems through raised expectations.[146]

Another proposal sought to link water supply with the depth of subsoil water, and demarcation of zones on this basis: thus for zone A with a spring level of 40 feet or

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144. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Special Questions, No.3.

145. Ibid., p.17.

146. Ibid., p.16.

above, the annual irrigation permissible be 50 per cent; for zone B with a depth to spring level of 25 to 40 per cent, and for zone C, with a spring level depth of less than 25 feet, the irrigation permissible be fixed at 25 per cent.[147] This proposal, implemented on the Lower Jhelum Canal, exempted bār lands, which not being prone to a high spring level, were allowed 75 per cent. Surprisingly, the Superintending Engineer added that government, "could give no definite promise as to per cent of irrigation while reserving for itself the right to reduce canal water supply in case of a rise in spring level."[148] It was hoped that by fixing a low intensity percentage for zones B and C a check would be kept on the abandonment of wells, the steady working of which would, in turn, keep down the spring level in these low lying tracts. As the waterlogging menace increased in the Hafizabad tract, there too the intensity was reduced from 75 per cent to 50 per cent.[149]

✓ The Executive Engineer on the Lower Chenab Canal, pointed out that while the proposal was theoretically fine, it would be found "highly unpopular and difficult to arrange. Even now the department is unpopular because we try to reduce irrigation to the 75 per cent permissible

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147. Ibid. Special Question regarding colony condition on LJC, p.60.

148. Ibid.

149. Thompson, 1925, p.22.

limit, what would it be if we were to try and reduce the percentage of some of the villages now doing 110 per cent and more to about 60 per cent or so as would be necessary under the zone system."[150] He was of the opinion that Colonists would not take to well irrigation, with its heavy work, and the "result will be discontent..."[151]

The problem was more than merely one of nomenclature or percentages of intensity. The real cause of the dispute was the reduction of supplies to the early Colonists as canal irrigation and Colonization progressed, The Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works, Punjab, explained to the Colonies' Committee that extensions on the Chenab Canal were being undertaken since there was sufficient waste land lying uncultivated which could be irrigated and distributed among potential Colonists. While asserting, on the one hand, that the river supply was sufficient to irrigate these lands in addition to the permissible areas already under irrigation, on the other he conceded that the only result affecting settlers would be "reduced supply to those obtaining more than necessary for their permissible areas."[152] He asserted that the canals carried a "larger supply than is necessary for the areas to be irrigated. The extra supply is allowed to be used by peasant settlers,

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150. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Answers File, p.15.

151. Ibid.

152. Ibid., Reply to Question 4, p.18.

pending it being required on extensions so as to benefit both them and the public revenues, rather than allow it to be wasted by being sent down the river and not taken into the canal."[153]

Meanwhile government stepped up a crusade against 'waste' of water. The reports are replete with descriptions of how water delivered from the canals was allowed to go waste; of heavy irrigations being applied to fallow fields with no provisions for subsequent cultivation. It was also 'discovered' that most crops were receiving at certain times of the year, much more water than was actually needed. The greatest waste as per official statements, occurred in the months June to September, when there was plenty of water in the rivers and canals ran full supply as well. Fodder crops, officials pointed out, seemed to be the recipient of most of the excessive supply since these could withstand excessive irrigation with less damage. Government, consequently, was at pains to evolve methods by which economy in irrigation may be enforced.[154]

The picture presented is that of an irrational peasant who was loth to refuse water even when he was getting surplus. Yet if one approaches this very evidence from the viewpoint of the cultivator, a different picture emerges. Thus, between 1892 and 1905, when the first

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153. Ibid.

154. Ibid. Answers File, Passim.

major disturbances took place in the Colonies - the agriculturists had witnessed the proverbial stretching of the cloth: As land under cultivation increased, the water available, in the rivers and the canals, was reduced; further the prevailing conflict and confusion regarding 'permissiole' and 'haqq' area raised many a doubt in the peasant's mind; to add to the uncertainty, the Irrigation Branch initiated a process of remodelling or altering outlets on the one hand, while going ahead with charges for waste and improper use of water; to top it all, while complaints regarding distribution of water accumulated, government proceeded to announce enhancement of water charges. This was really the last straw, as far as the Colonists were concerned. We are not at this point going into the reasons of, and nature of the 1905, disturbances. What is being pointed out here, however, is that in the face of the stance government took vis-a-vis the distribution of water the peasant was not irrational. If at all he was, his 'irrationality' was in response to the irrational or 'arbitary' posture that government was adopting.

Questioned about the reasons for which remodelling or alteration of outlets was undertaken and whether this would result in certainty of supply, the Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle confirmed that "there can be no finality about the size of outlets on this or

the circumstances? The matter has been reported and referred by the local government often enough, but no real reformation has been attempted."[173] The problem lay not just at the government end. The discussion around the question of waste of water and charges for the same amply brought out that among the agriculturists themselves, some were taking advantage, at the cost of the others. The Superintending Engineer, Lower Jhelum Colony stated that "it is undoubtedly the case that petty canal officials receive pecuniary consideration for failure to bring cases of waste of water to notice."[174] Opposing the proposal for bulk sales of water, the Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works, Punjab expressed the opinion that "great difficulty is likely to arise in the distribution of water by the different cultivators among themselves and in the collection of propertionate payments from them, unless both distribution and assessment were done by an outside superior authority; and government alone would be such; the strong would certainly take advantage of the weak and much injustice and suffering would result."[175] The Executive Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal, thought that while this "might be effective in a yeoman or capitalist village where the management of a number of squares rests with one man who looks after his tenants and serves the supply just where

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173. I.I.C., Appendix, op.cit., p.50.

174. Rev.Agri. Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Special Questions, p.107.

175. Ibid., Question No.10, p.35

he sees a necessity; it would be quite different in peasant villages where each individual has to get a turn and where each one is selfish enough not to be prepared to give up a part even of his turn to benefit his brother. The strain of this is apparent in the winter months with the rabi crops where through short supplies in the river these canals have to run their branches in turns. One cultivator may be lucky enough to get his supply in a turn in which he can sow wheat and the canal may just be closed when another's turn come on. This cultivator may be deprived entirely of a crop if the internal management is left in the hands of the individuals - of a village.[176] The Executive Engineer for Jhang Division of the Lower Chenab Canal was certain that considering even when the cultivators pay for the actual matured irrigation there was trouble in seeing that each of the shareholders gets his share in proper turns; "if the water were to be sold by bulk, we will require a staff, almost as big as the present one, to see that the rich lambardār does not rob the poor of his share or what sometimes does much more damage, give his share at a time when he does not want it."[177]

The extent to which canal water made a difference was reflected in some of the proverbs in this region:[178]

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176. Ibid. p.38.
177. Ibid.
178. BEIP, PVS, II, p.82

any other canal", for the discharge varied with the head of water pressure, silt movement and so on.[155]

The complaints received by the canal administration fell in two categories: those made by cultivators at the head and those made by cultivators at the tail of the channels. While "those at the tail complain that we do not give them enough water, those at the head complain that we so frequently alter their outlets that they do not know where they are".[156]

Whereas, government had already by the first decade of the twentieth century begun talk of restricting supplies, the first round of settlement operations in these areas brought to light the fact that canal water supply to many of the Colony tracts was yet to stabilize. The assessment Report for Jhang and Gugera Branch Circles, Jhang district, observed that while irrigation in the tract had generally improved, the villages in the Chiniot tahsil at the tail of the Wagwala, Kot Ahmadyar Branch, and Kot Wasana Minor still do not achieve their 'minimum permissible area' in all cases; while these were said to be improving, "the supply at the tail of the nazrānā distributory in mauzā 98 and 99, Jhang Branch, sometimes breaks down". To this

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155. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Answer File, p.22.

156. Ibid. Evidence File, p.581.

was added the great lurking fear in the back of the zamindars' mind that "when the Triple Canal Colonization Scheme opens, his water-supply will be reduced."[157]

Almost all assessment reports of the region refer to complaints of this kind. Going by the issues that came up before the Colonies' Committee, the major problems were on account of (a) high land (b) tail villages (c) changes in outlets (d) inadequate and improper drainage and (e) corruption. All these plagued the different canals in varying degrees.[158] Government, while admitting these problems, adopted measures which either ignored or worsened the conditions. Thus it was not uncommon to restrict supplies at the Head Works, especially during the monsoon; at times carrier canals were closed during the kharif seasons; closure of distributaries was also resorted to, particularly in water-logged tracts; sometimes a reorganisation of the village water-courses was undertaken by which shorter 'wāris' were arranged; the building of ridges or bunds was at times enforced - involving extra labour which proved to be a very laborious process for moderate cultivators.

There was no dearth of proposals from government quarters. Thus at one point settlement officers were

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157. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit., para 20.

158. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.Evidence File, pp.42-46.

asked to explore whether any persons on one outlet, more especially yeomen and capitalists, would take a fixed demand for land revenue and occupier's rate (ābiānā), based on the average of the past for a short period.[159] The Settlement Officer for Jhang and Gugera Branches reported back that he had in fact received some applications to this effect, adding that in each case, the applicant had expressed a willingness to take up such a contract, provided government assured them that their outlet would not be reduced during the period of the contract. The reply received from the Executive Engineer, Lyallpur division, maintained that the Canal Department, "reserves to itself the right to reduce outlets when it chooses". Not only were all the applications withdrawn but the settlement officer himself expressed the view that, "failing such a promise I much doubt that anyone would be willing to adopt such a contract."[160] Approximately 110 persons gave evidence before the Colonies' Committee regarding the water distribution problem, with the majority of government officials arguing the official view point. The zamindars represented their case before the committee pointing out that their complaints to zillādārs regarding distribution of water went unheeded while complaints to higher authorities set the zillādārs

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159. Ibid.

160. Ibid., Evidence of Sayad Kalam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Multan, p.57.

against them - resulting in their getting even less water.[161] In some cases complaints drawing attention to the bad state of crops in certain villages met with the stock reply that, as per statistics, the haqq area had been matured while the Colonists absolutely denied this. In any case the validity of statistics did not improve the state of the crop.

Cultivators also came forward with complaints of extortion in the canal department. Shahabu, a lambardār of mauzā 104, Jhang Branch, narrated how people were sent from one officer to another for matters such as changes in outlets etc. and how they had to pay everywhere: "the treasury officials loot us; all officials loot us", he emphatically stated.[162] Father Cageton, of mauzā 51, Gugera Branch, whose estate lay on the tail of the Khunnan Minor complained that when he complained of withered crops not only did he not get a sympathetic hearing - he was instead told that the fault lay with his cultivators while the fact was that the trouble was due to the "unsatisfactory way in which the Khunnan Minor, and in particular, the water courses of his village worked.[163] While Father Cageton drew attention to the heavy debts his tenants had incurred due to these and other problems the officials wryly commented that

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161. Ibid., Passim.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid., Evidence File, p.39.

his tenants were "sweepers by caste and were no doubt prone to extravagance."[164]

Risaldar Major Chiragh Khan, a capitalist grantee of twenty five squares in Lyallpur referred to overseers and mistris who had great power of making extortions in connection with the fixing of outlets:

> "If a zamindar has succeeded after great trouble in getting an outlet of a certain size sanctioned by the superior canal authorities, the local mistri can still cause him great loss by the way in which he erects the moga, fixing it either too high or crooked so that it will not discharge properly..."[165]

While numerous such complaints were forthcoming wherever the Committee gathered evidence, resistance to the Committee itself was mounted by none less than the Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department. Mr. J.J. Mullaly in a note to the Committee, charged that, "the agitation against the Canal Department was the result not only of question put by the comittee but also of the known bias against the Canal Administration, but of the district officers in charge of the canal tracts."[166] Arguing that the complaints were "so few and so contradictory," he asserted that "we should have heard nothing of these complaints against the Canal Administration, just as we should have heard nothing of the demand for proprietory

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164. Ibid.

165. Ibid., p.362

166. Ibid., Answers File, Note dated 3.8.1908

rights, had not the people been given to understand that such complaints were quite expected."[167]

It is clear that the entire process of reaching water to the fields and enforcing the will and wish of government policy was not only arduous, but also that its successful prosecution "depended to a large extent on the maintenance of the personnel of the Public Works Department at an adequate strength."[168] There emerged a canal 'bureaucracy', within the local Public Works Department, functioning under the Chief Engineer and Secretary to government, Irrigation, officers employed exclusively for the purpose of construction, management and development of the canals.

The Irrigation Commission believed that on the one hand "the effect of imposing on the Irrigation Officer the duty of supervising the assessments and the internal distribution of the water-supply has been to bring him into a closer and kindlier touch with the cultivators, and to give him a more detailed knowledge of their wants than would have been possible in Northern India under any other system of management.[169] Sitting members of the Commision, however, also bemoaned the fact that whereas "many years ago it was the most popular branch of the Public Works Department in North India, and consequently commanded the services of the most competent engineers, now this is all changed.

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167. Ibid.
168. I.I.C., General Report, p.99
169. Ibid., p.101.

Engineers are reluctant to enter the canal service, and anxious to leave it."[170] At the lower level on the contrary, the introduction of canal irrigation led to a keen competition for appointment to the post of lambardārs, and in many cases sanction was sought for an increase in lambardāri.[171]

That the situation was not free from hazards for the peasants, the 'beneficiaries' of canal irrigation is clear from the endless number of complaints against canal officers referred to earlier. The corruption prevalent amongst the canal patwāris, and lambardārs; both, in distribution of water and timing of water and more so in an indiscriminate imposition of fines, legal and illegal, was made amply clear by hundreds of withesses who appeared before the Colonies' Committee.[172] (See Tables 3.7 and 3.8).

The Irrigation Commission itself sounded the warning note while arguing for maintenance of high standards amongst officers. Taking exception to the heterogenous mass of imperial engineers, provincial engineers, temporary engineers picked up anyhow - it concluded : "the confusion is terrible. How can a proper standard be gained under

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170. Ibid., p. 102.

171. S.R., Jhang, 906, p.47.

172. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, Pro 1-4, Evidence File, op.cit., passim,

TABLE 3 .7

FINES IMPOSED ON COLONISTS 1898 TO 1907

	Imposed	Collected
Fines warranted by condition	32,399	27,094
Fines imposed in lieu of confiscation	1,59,722	41,266
Fines not warranted by conditions	1,16,239	51,370
Fines for illicit cultivation (unclassified)	36,052	21,380
Total	3,44,453	1,41,110

Source : Canal Colonies Committee Report, 1909, p. 765.

TABLE 3 .8

FINES IMPOSED ON COLONISTS 1900-1907

Year	Imposed Rs.	Collected Rs.
1900	5,945	3,522
1901	21,399	11,392
1902	23,635	3,266
1903	1,15,426	11,374
1904	66,292	29,091
1905	55,734	38,109
1906	44,958	38,637
1907	10,087	4,743

Source : Canal Colonies Committee Report, 1909, p. 766.

"Mūdh dā faqir, te pand dā amir"
(A beggar near the head of the canal is as good as a rich man at its tail)

The fact that money exercised its own power was also well-known :

"Pand dā pich, nā pit nā pārit, zar zardijit".
(Irrigation at the tail of a canal cannot be got for love : he wins who spends money and supplicates)[179]

The village survey for Multan, specifically mentioned that "the poorer cultivators seldom sought justice from the Canal Department, regarding wāriḃandi laws under Section 68 of the Canal and Drainage Act of North India of 1873. It noted that even if a cultivator was driven by desperation to petition "when the case is referred to a Court, he will withdraw it the next morning either from fear or through the persuasion of the big landlords."[180]

The Executive Engineer, Burala Division, Chenab Colony sought to brush away the problem by blaming it on the 'primitiveness' of the Jangli: "in ordinary villages there is no such trouble though I have frequently heard of quarrels about petty matters in Jangli Villages such as are never heard of from others."[181]

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179. Ibid., p.86.

180. Ibid., p.83.

181. Ibid., Evidence File, p.390.

The Superintending Engineer on the Lower Chenab Canal Circle sought to clarify the government's position on the question of size of outlets in this context :

> "Just as a zamindar is entitled to ask that an outlet shall be enlarged if at any time it is found to be too small, so also the canal officer must have power to reduce an outlet at any time, if he finds it is too large; any other arrangement would be one-sided and impossible. The head through the present outlets can be increased by the people themselves by clearing their watercourses thus lowering the level of the water surface."[182]

In consequence of this many outlets draw off more water than was intended and "inspite of the fact that outlets have been reduced water does not reach the tails of certain distributaries when authorised supply enters the head."[183] He believed that the size of the outlets must be reduced for those villages which were found to get more than their share of water in order to benefit other villages which were badly off. By the mid 1930s when a fresh round of settlement operations was undertaken, extensive remodelling of outlets had been undertaken in the large part of the Lower Chenab Colony atleast. While describing the remodelling of outlets operations, the tendency on the part of officials was to highlight that a substantial measure of equality had been achieved in the distribution of water. This was partly attributable to the Adjustable Proportionate Module which made control and check on water discharge easier and more

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182. Ibid., Question 6, p.22

183. Ibid.

efficient. In Lyallpur, it was claimed that "the marvel is that there is not a tail chak but is now receiving its permissible supply or more. Indeed the general feeling of content regarding adequacy of supplies is so apparent that the irresistible conclusion is that even-handed justice has been done all round."[184] In the last twenty-five years, government claimed, the full supply factor at the outlet head had been steadily raised from 200 to 264 acres per cusec in 1925, and that with a water allowance designed to mature only 75% of the allotted area the zamindar in fact matures 40% and even 50% greater acreage: "matured area statistics should give quietus to carping critics who are never tired of clamouring that canal supplies have been so vigorously reduced as to endanger the well-being and prosperity of the Colony population."[185]

In Samundri tahsil, after remodelling "the result was so satisfactory that there is no chak of the tahsil now where the state of irrigation warrants field to field Kharaba inspection--remarkable since long distributaries bristling with minors intensify the troublesome task of securing adequate supplies for tail chaks."[186] That some problem persisted with the tail chaks is brought out by the following statement in the same report: "in abnormal years of deficient supply in the river, occasionally resort has

184. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.6.

185. Ibid.

186. A.R., Samundri, op.cit., p.7.

to be made to the unsatisfactory expedient of rotational closures to convey adequate supplies to these chaks."[187] The fact that the results were not evenly spread out was supported by the fact that while on the Tandlianwala distributary the average area matured as per cent of allotted was 115 on the Killianwala and Khatuana distributaries it was as low as 85% or 87%."[188]

In Toba Tek Singh, despite remodelling, "difficulties persisted in a number of chaks at the extremities, particularly at the tail of Jhang Branch."[189] In atleast three chaks the full supply factor was reduced from 264 acres to one cusec of water to 175 acres to the cusec "to compensate for inferior soil and difficulty of distribution."[190] Further, in these, the water allowance per acre was increased from the normal 2.84 cusec to 4.29 cusecs per 1,000 acres. While the average figures for matured area between the years 1923-33 approximated over 102, falling below that only during the depression years, coming down once to 80 but also going up to 107, on the tail chaks the percentage of area matured ranged between 61, at its lowest, and 87 at the highest.[191]

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187. Ibid.
188. Ibid.
189. A.R., Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., pp.5-6.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid.

The Settlement Officer testified that in some of the chaks in the Toba Tek Singh tahsil :

> "Poor supply appears to be chronic. 264-GB is particularly unfortunate. For a single chak of 59 squares there is only one outlet. In the hot weather irrigation turns come so late that the crops raised cannot attain any degree of excellence. Add to this the fact that the soil is poor. The proprietors are Gaddi Biloches - not the best of agriculturists. It is small wonder that the proprietory body is depressed. The Tarkhani tail chaks 185, 186, 187 and 188 are no better. The Superintending Engineer, East Circle, has been particularly sympathetic to the chaks on the tail of Mungi and Tarkhani distributaries and has been endeavouring to improve their irrigation; but I doubt if there can be any tangible permanent result."[192]

Considering this to be the "least fortunate circle in the district in the matter of irrigation," the officer concluded that the poorer chaks "should not be assessed to full ābiānā rates..."[193] The Report for Gugera Branch Circle, Lower Chenab Canal referred to three Jangli villages, numbers 537, 538 and 539 "which have been approached from all directions, but which defy all efforts made to irrigate them adequately."[194] In some years the villages had to be altogether deserted. Thus in 1907-1908 when the rains failed, crops on only two acres out of twelve-and-a-half acre holdings were matured.[195]

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192. Ibid.

193. Ibid.

194. A.R., Gugera Branch Circle, Lower Chenab Canal, p.3.

195. Ibid., p.22.

In some villages, as in the case of Gajju Chak, in Gujranwala district, canal water was not utilized to the extent that it might be. This was attributed primarily to the fact that canal water was available only in the kharif harvest, except for a preliminary watering for rabi crops before sowing, after which the canal closed down. In order to mature rabi crops cultivators had to work the wells - which increased expenses on cattle and labour. In such instances, cultivators found their expenses going up disproportionately due to payment of water-rates. Increase in water-rates in 1924 strengthened the cultivators' disinclination to use canal water, and to depend more on wells; use of canal water, however, went up if the rains failed - as happened in the case of 1921 and 1922 kharif harvest.[196]

In general, however, in this village the cultivators tried to work the wells and avoid canal water rates. There was, at the same time, no holding which was purely barani, chāhi or nahri holding - for all cultivation was mixed.[197]

To conclude this section we may briefly say that while government was adopting a double-edged strategy - of both cutting down supply as well as charging more for

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196. BEIP, PVS, 6, p.60.

197. Ibid., p.63.

it the cultivator was at the receiving end. The supply remained erratic, both in timing and quantum; distribution remained uneven while those who were more well-placed took advantage of their economic status and location of their lands to ensure a full supply and perhaps more; the corruption rampant amongst the canal bureaucracy created further bitterness, especially among those could not pay.

What were the options before those deprived of an adequate supply? The incessant demand for remissions on account of failure of crops was one option commonly resorted to; agitation was another - as happened in the case of the 1905 disturbances; a third option, which did not attract this kind of attention was, however, equally important and long lasting - viz., the shift in cropping patterns which was to a large extent related to the question of quantity, timing and charges for supply. While we now turn to the question of remissions, the pattern of land use will be discussed in the next chapter.

Section V: Crop Failure and Revenue Remission

The incidence of kharābā or failed crops on total area sown was directly linked to revenue and irrigation policy. Having had its origins in a high proportion of crop failure and famine conditions prevailing in Punjab through out a large part of the nineteenth century, the

issue of kharābā also got linked up with the debate on the question of fixed and fluctuating land revenue demand. Since 1882, when a broad classification of secure, insecure and fluctuating tracts was drawn up, revenue instructions had talked of 'elasticity' and 'moderation'. The 1902 instructions tried to interpret 'elasticity' in the specific context of (a) widespread calamities such as famine, drought and general failure of crops and (b) local or isolated calamities such as hail, floods and locusts.[198] In the course of discussion on these issues, government made a clear distinction between 'elasticity' of assessment' and 'elasticity of collection'. Having expressed itself in favour of fixed assessment, government logically followed it up with its disapproval of kharābā, emphasising that in principle the revenue-payer "has not by rule or contract any right to an acatement of the fixed demand assessed upon his lands at assessment".[199] This was justified on the grounds that demand was so pitched as to allow for, "ordinary variations of season during the period of settlement, and the demand ought in theory to be paid in bad years as well as in good."[200] However, since government could not escape noticing "the evil effects of

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198. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1902, A.Pro.32, F.161.

199. Ibid., Pro.33.

200. Ibid.

rigidity of collection in adverse seasons," it also accepted the need for remissions.[201] While accepting the need for remissions, the point was carefully driven home that these were "a measure purely of grace and not of right", lest these come to be looked upon as a regular feature of the administration.[202]

The same understanding prevailed with respect to kharābā in the Colonies. Since in the Colonies Kharābā was linked to non-availability of water, it was blamed on the cultivators' desire to spread irrigation over more than the 'permissible area. In view of this: "tendency of the settlers to attempt the cultivation of a much larger proportion of their holdings than it has even been intended to irrigate annually..." government expected him to pay for his gamble.[203] Whereas it was proposed to bind the peasants to bring under cultivation one-third of the area of their holdings within three years from allotment and half within five, they had practically broken up nearly two-thirds within the first three years. From one point of view this was most satisfactory but the tenants were aiming at "quantity rather than quality, the cultivation is naturally of

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201. Ibid.

202. Ibid.

203. Revenue Report of the Irrigation Department, Punjab 1894-95.

the roughest and poorest character, and the canal is very severely taxed to afford the required supply".[204] It was suggested that in cases where tenants had "recklessly attempted to irrigate more than a certain proportion of their holdings in either harvest, remissions should be restricted."[205]

Strangely though, while on the one hand washing its hands of the responsibility ofor kharābā, government felt entitled to charge ābiānā on the entire land actually irrigated, including that for which kharābā was being claimed.[206] Since the government insisted on asserting its right in terms of charges for water the, cultivator felt equally justified in claiming compensation for crops that had failed to mature on account of what he saw as insufficient irrigation. Till 1912 the government succeeded in having the best of it both ways: disapproving of kharābā which in official terms resulted from improper cultivation and illegal spread of canal water - and charging water-rates for it at the same time. The role of other factors leading to failure of crops or high incidence of kharābā was rarely recognised.

There were other problems as well. What was the unit to be dealth with while granting relief? What was

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204. Ibid.

205. Ibid.

206. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1915, A.Pro.43, F.7.

to be the scale of relief for varying degrees of crop failure; What authority was empowered to sanction relief? Under what circumstances were suspensions to be converted into remissions, and so on.

Regarding the circumstances in which relief was to be given it was generally believed, up to 1901, that relief was not to be given for up to half a normal crop although it did not follow that the failure of more than half a crop will always justify relief. The need was all this while felt for a standard scale of relief on arithmetical basis, with the degree of relief increasing as the yield decreased. It was finally worked out as follows:[207]

With a 16 anna crop being treated as normal.

Crop	Degree of relief
6 annas and less than 8 annas	25%
4 annas and less than 6 annas	50%
less than 4 annas	100%

Since promptness was an important factor in relief, it was envisaged that a field-to-field, enquiry would be impossible, therefore, it was decided that suspensions be announced on the basis of information compiled by villages or homogeneous groups of villages, and the collector be given the right to make alterations later. Gradually the

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207. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1905, A.Pro.8.

opinion gathered strength that in situations where collection seemed impossible, it was better to remit at once rather than keep the demand hanging over the heads of revenue payers. Revenue which had been under suspension for three years was to be remitted as a matter of course. Government also decided that as a general rule no revenue which had been suspended should be collected until after one fair harvest subsequent to the failure had been reaped in the affected tract.[208]

Having come to an understanding regarding these in 1905, the Department of Revenue and Agriculture heaved a sigh of relief in the belief "that the administration of the fixed land revenue system will be freed from the evils of excessive rigidity which have in some places hitherto attached to it, and that a degree of elasticity will have been introduced - sufficient to ensure that in times of agricultural calamity the burdens of the cultivating classes are not aggravated by any unreasonable insistence on the demands of government."[209]

Even during the time kharābā was retained, it should be clear that no everyone who needed relief, got it. There was, first of all the tedious process of getting relief sanctioned. Since remissions were granted only in cases of grave loss, there were numerous instances, of

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208. Ibid., Pro. 9.

209. Ibid.

crops being damaged but not "sufficiently destroyed" to entitle them to full remissions. Even in the year 1907 when incidence of crop failure was high, full remissions were given on only one branch, the rest getting between 25 to 50 per cent. The assessment report for Upper Jhang Branch Circle narrated how toria, "a crop which gets very little 'kharābā' suffered extensive damage. Whereas in the case of toria it was hard to tell the damage till the crop was cut, it was not always feasible that the cultivator leave the crop standing till the zillādār found time to inspect it - the cultivator had to choose between the option of risking further damage by shelling, frost or rain, or to cut it and forego all kharābā, very often he chose the last.[210] Needless to say that remissions were granted only on crops which had not been cut or grazed prior to kharābā inspection.

The importance of the decision to abolish kharābā in 1912 except in special circumstances can be seen by a glance at the incidence and scale of remission in the first decade of the twentieth century (Tables 3.9-3.11).

The assessment report for the Gugera Branch Circle, I, 1911, stated clearly that in three mauzās the proportion of area irrigated to area allotted was only 30 per cent

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210. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch Circle, LCC, 1911, op.cit.

TABLE 3 .9

EXTENT OF KHARABA - JHANG BRANCH II, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

S. No.(Vill.)	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
172	35	39	12
173	35	17	11
175	20	28	11
176	21	11	14
177	22	17	35
182	39	13	18
183	20	14	11
209	13	12	10
212	15	3	13
216	21	14	7
217	20	9	8
229	19	20	8
230	19	6	6
232	31	14	4
233	17	6	5
247	17	10	3
248	17	5	4
249	21	15	14
257	19	5	11
268	19	8	6
269	24	32	8
276	22	13	13
312	28	28	19
324	18	32	36
329	22	31	18
341	23	28	29
345	30	15	14
373	32	36	26

Source : A.R., Jhang Branch, II, March 1911.

TABLE 3 .10

EXTENT OF KHARABA - JHANG BRANCH III, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

S. No.(Vill.)	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
397	19	29	22
398	25	13	23
399	22	21	21
401	18	36	22
402	19	32	21
406	17	27	16
409	33	11	20
410	32	26	19
411	44	25	37
412	32	22	19
424	20	12	8
438	31	17	11
439	30	21	29
440	22	5	11
442	19	5	11
443	19	6	8
446	15	3	8
447	39	4	12
448	23	9	12
449	19	6	11
450	28	8	13
451	18	47	13
463	29	9	21
469	16	23	18

Source : A.R., Jhang Branch III, 1911.

TABLE 3 .11

EXTENT OF KHARABA - UPPER JHANG BRANCH, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

No. of Villages	1905-1906	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
157	19.96	29.70	14.9	4.2
156	24.57	29.70	34.1	5.9
154	16.01	26.70	8.1	1.8
144	35.30	33.80	9.8	3.6
145	62.07	57.06	22.9	11.4
153	20.40	32.60	14.2	4.7
136	19.30	30.50	8.4	5.4
141	48.80	38.50	22.9	9.5
137	37.30	57.90	17.2	5.8
129	20.30	28.30	10.6	3.1
107	11.70	30.10	30.1	2.9
99	15.10	34.90	49.09	10.1

Source : A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, 1911.

in the year 1907-08 where there was no rain to supplement canal supply. Of the 30 per cent irrigated also, 20 per cent failed leaving each of these Jangli term grantees only 3 out of 12½ acres matured.[211] On the Rakh Branch Circle with the abolition of kharābā, the area subject to land revenue increased by some 30,000 acres in this one circle alone.[212] Since kharābā was abolished around the same time as fresh assessment was being undertaken, the net increase in the revenue from the canal areas would have been enormous with a corresponding increase in the burden on peasantry.

Interestingly, just two years after the abolition of remissions for failed crops - except in special circumstances - government of Punjab, recognised the power to sanction remissions of land revenue as a reward to villagers who resisted the attacks of dacoits;[213] a few years later, the Secretary, Army Department also recommended grant of remissions to certain sections. Compensation for the "losses to agriculture and kindred industries occasioned by the withdrawal of so large a population for military service, and the stimulus to future recruiting which would be given if government showed in a practical and substantial form its recognition of the exceptional sacrifices made by

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211. A.R.Gugera Branch Circle I, LCC, 1911, op.cit., para 29.

212. A.R. Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit., para 8.

213. Rev.Agri.Rev., March 1914, A.Pro.5, F.89.

particular villages sub-divisions of a village or even familiar in the province."[214]

The question of kharābā had featured prominently among the issues under consideration of the Canal Colonies' Committee. In the evidences before the Committee, offical opinion emerged in favour of dispensing with remissions. Pointing to the link between kharābā and the corruption among lower rung officials of the Irrigation Department, Mullaly, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works in Punjab, gave the official version of hazards stemming from kharābā: firstly, he said, given the difficulty in accurately estimating a standing crop, "no honest official will ever be able to satisfy a cultivator that the crop has been fairly assessed", secondly kharābā entailed the "deputing of great powers to low paid officials and leads to much extortions".[215]

Illegal extortions were closely linked to grant of remissions. The Deputy Commissioner for Gujranwala, for instance, stated in his evidence before the Canal Colonies' Committee that in many cases on the Lower Chenab Canal, "the Patwāris told the people to pay them Rs.2 a killā in order that they could make recommendations for them, and in many cases the people did so."[216] The Colonisation

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214. Rev.Agri.Rev., July 1919, Pro.34, F.94.

215. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Special Question, File , p.103.

216. Ibid., Evidence File, p.556.

Officer to had "heard that considerable sums were paid to zillādārs about the recent large remissions" but did not believe that all those accused were guilty, if the regular Faslānā , which was taken not only in the Colony tracts but all over Punjab, was excluded.[217] While Sardar Khan, lambardar of mauzā 36B, grantee on horse-breeding terms in the Lower Jhelum Colony was of the view that the zillādar often did not give kharābā as, "to do so amounts to a confession of his own fault";[218] The Deputy Collector in the Colony believed that perhaps only "five per cent of the zillādārs may take money".[219] It was "only those zillādārs, who have been promoted from patwāri-ships who still take bribes, but only very few even of these..."[220] The paltry sum of Rs.10 given as salary to a Patwāri was also cited as one reason for the corruption prevalent.

Whether or not zillādārs accepted money from the cultivators, they did not always show sympathy to the peasants' woes; "like all subordinate government officials in this country his (zilladar's) general tendency is to decide every doubt in favour of government and he probably finds it gives him less trouble in the end to be over

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217. Ibid.

218. Ibid., Evidence File, p.62.

219. Ibid., p.81.

220. Ibid.

severe in his assessment than overlenient".[221] The zillādār had strong motives for not granting liberal remissions for failed crops, since majority opinion amongst officials disapproved of the "excessively liberal remissions".[222] Just as revenue demand was found light except for incompetent cultivators, kharābā was considered to be a "premium on bad and careless cultivation", resulting from improper watercourses and distribution arrangements, as also slothfullness in making kiāris and other operations aimed at optimum use of water.[223]

A related problem was that of the assessing agency. Owing to the system under which the assessments both of revenue and water-rates were modified annually by the application of rules regarding kharābā (till such time as kharābā was abolished) the assessing agency occupied a position of special importance in Punjab. For this reason the Canal Department which constituted the assessing agency, maintained a large staff. However, over a period of time, their effectivity and impartiality come to be questioned. Concerned at the complaints against canal officers, the Colonies' Committee explored the possibility of transfer of assessing responsibility to another agency. While on the one hand official opinion attributed complaints against

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221. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1902, A.Pro.33, F.161, op.cit.

222. Ibid.

223. Ibid.

the canal officers to the problem of kharābā, on the other it was felt that it was 'impossible' for the ordinary revenue staff to supervise satisfactory canal assessments on a large scale. Since canal officers were in any case employed on canals, they were readily accessible to people to look into complaint regarding deficient irrigation. It was considered doubtful whether any advantage would be gained by transferring canal assessments from canal officers and their subordinates to Tahsildars and their subordinates; maintenance of a dual subordinate agency seemed the only possible way. In the Committee itself divergent opinions were expressed - with Major Popham Young favouring a radical change under which the whole of the assessments of canal or land revenue dues would be entrusted to revenue authorities, while Mr.Baillie argued that transfer of the work of assessment would not offer a solution since the real cause of problems lay in the system of assessment itself.

The Depression and the Remission Question

The discussion on remissions was reopened in government circles, at the end of the 1920s - the occasion being provided by the unprecedented slump in prices. Having earlier abolished general remission on the grounds that the revenue demand was moderate enough

to be paid in adverse circumstances as well (Section III supra) government had to retrace its steps in the late twenties. Uncollected balances of land revenue soared high as the West Punjab peasantry was exposed to perhaps the worst crisis in international price history. For the first time government had to serously consider sanction of remissions on grounds of a fall in prices. The ruin aggravated by the fact that the Depression came in the wake of a series of bad harvests due to frost, dust-storm, hail, locusts, insect pests, floods, ill-times or excessive rainfall and cattle-disease. Close on all these disasters came the Depression when prices of agricultural commodities fell, in some cases to one-fourth or one-third of the boom period. While on the one hand this gave rise to serious problems stemming from increased insolvency, revenue defaulters and a corresponding congestion in jails, it became obvious that at current prices, the price of the produce of an acre was sometimes "not sufficient for the payment of even government dues."[224] The village survey for Gajju Chak in Lyallpur district recorded that on an average holding the per cent of crop required to meet government demand in 1932 amounted to 71 per cent of the produce in the case of the cotton crop, 75 per cent in the case of sugarcane and 173 per cent in the case of toria."[225]

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224. Report of the Abiana Committee, PWD, Punjab Irrigation Branch, 1934, p.24.

225. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.92.

When special remissions were announced during the depression years, many problems surfaced. Thus, for instance, the zilladar who inspected the crop was not in a position to give remission of fields which deserved it but for which no darkhwast had been submitted; while the truth was that many Colonists, and Janglis, refrained from applying as "rightly or wrongly, they have come to think that no useful purpose would be served by doing so."[226] Drawing attention to defects which could be easily rectified a settlement officer confessed that he himself was not fully aware of the process by which kharaba was applied for and granted. An application though given on time, was not admitted if the field number given and the field was identifiable. He felt that in the "more inaccessible parts of the jangli tract, general ignorance of even the square numbers, not to mention field numbers, effectively prevents submission of genuine petitions. Sometimes where square numbers are cited by the more intelligent janglis, the effort is often infructuous because the numbers quoted relate to the records of the first settlement."[227] Often patwaris did not furnish the requisite information without illegal gratification. Essentially the system of granting

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226. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.40.

227. Ibid.

TABLE 3.12

REMISSIONS DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS

	Tahsil/Circles	Total Abiana Demand Rs.	Remission (Abiana) 1928-29 to 1932-33 Rs.	Remissions land revenue Rs.
1.	Jaranwala	1,79,45,655	4,72,594	8,79,833
2.	Lyallpur	1,98,64,206	5,09,712	8,88,382
3.	Samundri	1,70,73,377	4,37,832	8,37,929
4.	Toba Tek Singh	1,70,00,919	6,14,886	9,06,208
5.	New Extensions	11,10,005	5,568	9,541
6.	Rakh Branch Circle (Sheikhupura district)	72,60,708	1,88,061	3,00,181
7.	Lahore	-	-	85,562*

* For 1930-32 only.

Source: S.R., Lyallpur, 1940, p. 21; A.R., Lahore, 1939, p. 5.

legitimate relief, presupposed a standard of literacy and knowledge totally lacking in most cases. In order to simplify the process it was proposed that "lambardārs be empowered to submit kharābā petitions for their entire pattis" without taking away the right of individual cultivators to submit petitions.[228]

But the question whether relief granted to the revenue payer was extended to the actual cultivators of the soil remained? Punjab supposedly had legislative provisions for this, and government further clarified that in cases where extension of relief to tenants could not be ensured, legislation may be enacted to preclude from relief (a) bad landlords and rack-renters (b) well-to-do landowners whose solvency was not threatened and (c) those capitalists, moneylenders and professional classes who held land purely as an investment.[229] Already section 30 of the tenancy Act (XVI of 1887) empowered a Revenue Officer, when the revenue of any land had been suspended or remitted, to suspend or remit the rent of the land, whatever the nature of the may be. The question that arose was - should the rent be suspended or remitted if a fraction of the land revenue had been suspended or remitted? Or should this be done only when the harvest

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228. Ibid.

229. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1905, A.Pro.9.

was a complete failure in which case the tenant would have no produce at all in any case? If the benefits of a revenue suspension were to be extended to a tenant then how would the landlord recover it in case of a change of tenant during the period of suspension and due date of payment? In the course of this discussion it emerged that in fact the provisions of section 30 of the Tenancy Act were not properly applicable to a rent which was a definite share of the produce, and that in practice the section never had been enforced with respect to such lands.[230] It was now proposed to legislate to this effect and clarify hat this provision would apply to (1) rent payable in kind of which the amount is fixed and (2) cash rents.[231] Officials argued that in Punjab it was rare for an occupancy tenant to be denied a share in the benefit, from remission or suspension of land revenue. Also while legally the tenants-at-will were not covered by this section, in Punjab "the demand for tenants is greater than the supply and they are able to make their own terms with their landlords".[232] It was also felt that "a well-to-do tenant who happens to have the means in a bad year may prefer to pay up when he can rather than wait for the order of realisation of the land revenue, and voluntary payments

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230. Rev.Agri.Rev., March 1905, Pro. 8.

231. Ibid.

232. Ibid.

of this nature by a tenant to his landlord should not be interfered with."[233] (emphasis added).

It was, proposed to give revenue officers the right to remit cash rents or rents payable in kind for land of which revenue had been remitted. The order passed in favour of the tenant was to be enforceable by means of the imposition of a fine which could be recovered as if it were an arrear of land revenue. This was done so that the landlord should not be free, as under the prevailing law, to accept liability under sub-sections (5) for the payment of his own suspended land revenue and to realize the suspended rent by threatening his tenant with eviction."[234] However, government was not bound to refund the fine imposed on the landlord. The revenue officer was not directed to offer a refund in all cases. Even during the depression; government was not willing to straightaway sanction remissions. In fact two of the prominent members of the Abiana Committee, set up to enquire into the question whether remission was called for, argued that reduction in water rates was neighter 'practicable', nor 'justifiable'.[235] While the other members of the Committee pointed out that peasants assets had suffered terribly:

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233. Ibid.
234. Ibid.
235. Report of the Abiana Committee, op.cit., p.4.

> "Not only as compared with the boom period, but also as compared with 1905-06, a year which really marks the end of a by-gone economic era. The economic handicap which the price level of agricultural produce today imposes on the agriculturists vis-a-vis the price level of 1905-06 is very grave indeed when we consider the distance of time which separates the two periods and the gulf of entirely changed economic parities which intervene between the two points of time. In the intervening period land revenue has been enhanced at least once in every part of the province. Water-rates have been revised the disadvantage of the occupier during the same period at least once on every canal and more than once on some of the canals. In the case of all valuable crops, all crops which in normal times used to bring in money, the revision of rates has resulted in an immense rise, the rise in the case of cotton, sugar-cane and wheat being no less than 120, 112 and 110 per cent respectively. The combined effects of unprecedented slump in prices, abnormally high water-rates, a vigorous system of the collection of government dues, and the crushing burden of indebtedness have reduced the agriculturist to an economic wreck, and it is up to government now to rescue him."[236]

The Committee recommended a reduction of Rs.1 crore considering that a figure lower than that would "take away from the effectiveness of the relief which is urgently needed." This figure, it was pointed out, represented I.D. Peeny, official member on the Abiana Committee argued against grant of remissions on water-rates on the grounds that little benefit would accrue to the tenant from such a measure; since on land under cash rents the relief or burden would fall on landlords

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236. Ibid., p.39.

in any case while batai rents were not easily adjusted to changes. A reduction in occupiers' rate would prompt the landlord to attempt to appropriate increased rent, though his success would depend on the relative strength vis-a-vis the tenant. Given the prevailing high pitch of rents, Penny was inclined to believe that landlords were likely to succeed in this effort:

> "a reduction in ābiānā will not with any certainty benefit the poorest classes of the agricultural population in Canal irrigated areas."[237]

Despite the official member's fervent plea agains it, the depression years saw remissions being granted - the only time when remissions were granted on account of fall in prices - although of only up to Rs.50 lakhs, which was far below what the Abiana Committee had recommended, and negligible in view of the hike in water charges in the years immediately preceding the Depression.

The granting of these remissions could not have brought relief to all, though. The settlement report for for Lyallpur district recorded that:

> "many poor peasants maintain that it is only the more vocal and influential cultivators who derive benefit from it. The fact that many inferior villages of poor jangli cultivators situated far away on the fringes of Samundri and Toba Tek Singh tahsils have never been allowed a single acre of kharābā lends colour to this complaint. It will

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237. Ibid., Appendix, pp.12-13.

> be argued that the peasants themselves are to blame, as they never care to apply for remissions; but the absence of claims, in some measure is due to the conviction that the result will not be fruitful."[238]

Conclusion /

In conclusion we may note the following trends with regard to the land revenue and irrigation charges: the land revenue from the Colony districts increased remarkably during these years; while the increase in cultivated area was also notable, it could not keep pace with the former. Consequently apart from an absolute increase, the incidence per acre was accompanied by an increase in cesses and other dues, further contributing to the burden on the peasantry. Government's search for avenues for increase also led to its attempts at scaling revenue on various grounds such as improvement in land and productivity, increase in prices, security provided by irrigation all of which contributed to an ever-increasing estimate of net assets which constituted the basis of assessment. Further use of cash rents as the basis for the cultivation of net assets was in itself doubtful, and definitely worked against the smaller cultivators, who usually cultivated poorer lands. When in 1928 revenue for land was fixed at quarter-net assets as against half net assets earlier

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238. S.R. Lyallpur, 1940, p.20.

the total demand contrary to logic went up, that too during and just after the depression years. We also discuss the process of distribution of water, the problems faced by those cultivating land at the tail of the distributaries and the harassment cultivators suffered at the hands of the canal bureaucracy. The excessive demand and insecurity of canal supply were together reflected in the incidence of kharābā. Government, however, resisted any attempt to link these, and went ahead with abolition of kharābā except under special circumstances. The devastation brought about by the depression and the consequent announcement of remissions, though nominal exposed the hollowness of government's claims that revenue assessments were made keeping in mind all contingencies and ought to be paid in good and bad years. The smaller peasants, cultivating bad lands in fact benefitted least from the remissions announced.

What reflection did such a policy find in the pattern of economic development? Where did the peasants, thrown headlong into the all-pervasive 'market' find themselves? How far did the benefits of rising prices reach the peasantry? These are some of the questions we turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter III

THE PEASANT UNDER THE CANAL COLONY REGIME

In this chapter we look at the revenue and irrigation policy as pursued in the Canal Colonies. The focus here is not on policy formulation per se; rather, we examine the nature and extent of revenue demand on the peasant, and the efforts made over time to increase this. What were the reasons the state advanced to explain this increase? Did it affect all equally? We also go into some details of the process of distribution of Canal water; the problems faced therein and the role of the 'canal bureaucracy'. Lastly, we examine the impact of both, land revenue and water-rate demand. Did it benefit all or were some entitled to relief under Kharābā? To what extent was relief given? What impact did state policy relating to these issues have vis-a-vis landlords and peasants or different strata of the peasantry?

The Background

As early as 1856, John Lawrence, recognised as the main force behind the 'Punjab School', wrote above revenue policy that:

> moderation of demand is not only due morally and actually to the people, but is also conducive to the best interests of the government.[1]

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1. Chief Commissioner's despatch to the Financial Commissioner, No.799, dated 9.9.1956.

Henceforth, Lawrence's statement was repeated in the course of almost every discussion on revenue policy in the state in a ritualistic manner. Often this was done so as to ward off any criticism of land revenue policy as it evolved; by keeping alive the memory of the paternalist tradition, Punjab officials also hoped to justify as 'moderate' the revenue demand even in the face of successive revision.[2] Bhattacharya, while discussing the fiscal burden on the peasantry in Central and Eastern Punjab, also draws attention to the relationship between evolution of settlement policy and the political needs - the former geared to ensuring a "long term increase of fiscal demand," while the latter pressed for "sustaining rural passivity if not loyalty".[3] Often the effort was to contrast this thrust of policy to highlight the point that British rule brought peace and prosperity to Punjab as against the anarchy and tyranny of Sikh rule. In the years to come, the record-breaking financial returns from the Canal Colonies were specifically cited in official writing to draw vivid pictures of this prosperity in Punjab. It needs to be noted here that while the province

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2. The ideological context, its purpose and limitations, in relation to land revenue policy have been recently discussed by Charlesworth in his study of agriculture and agrarian society in the Bombay Presidency. Charlesworth points out that while maintaining its 'closeness' to the utilitarian ideals, revenue policy in Bombay Presidency was also "basically empirical, worked out to accord with local reality". cf. Charlesworth, N., 1985, pp.40-60.

3. cf. Bhattacharya, N., 1985, op.cit., Chapter I. Discussion on the fiscal burden.

as a whole was contributing a large chunk to the royal treasury, in the form of revenue and irrigation receipts, within Punjab it was the Colony tracts which yielded the most; by 1928 the eight Colony districts contributed more revenue than the rest of the twenty-one district put together.[4] At the time of the 1915 settlement, the demand on account of land revenue and cesses in the Chenab Colony alone amounted to Rs.69,45,345, the sum exceeding that paid by any other district in India. If irrigation receipts were also taken into account, the Chenab Colony assumed on unchallenged position, prompting the Financial Commissioner to comment:

> that such pride of place should have been attained by a tract which thirty years ago was an arid wilderness, is a phenomenon which can never be sufficiently dwelt upon by those who seek to appraise the results and achievements of British rule in India.[5]

Government demand in the Colony tracts consisted of two broad heads - of land revenue and water charges. Both were of a fluctuating nature. The reasons behind this initially being (a) the tracts being subject to river action and the uncertainties thereof and (b) the continued extension of irrigation itself ruled out a fixed demand since the state wished to share in benefits arising from new lands coming under cultivation.

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4. P.C.R., 1928-29, p. 1.

5. C.S.R., op.cit., Note by Financial Commissioner, p. 1.

/By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the retention of the fluctuating system had become the subject of a full-fledged controversy involving the Government of India and the Government of Punjab on the one hand and, the latter and its own district officers at another. The agriculturists, whose interests were at stake, were hardly allowed a say in the matter. Meanwhile pressure mounted on the Government of Punjab to ensure a greater fixity of demand, with the Revenue Department emphasising that the system of assessment should be as simple as possible and the larger the amount of fixed revenue, the greater was the degree of simplicity that could be ensured." The government's position was that it stood to lose so long as fluctuating demand was retained, though how it did so, was never made clear. The specious argument that the cultivators' preference for a fluctuating assessment was based on the fact that "people think by paying a small sum of illegal money they are able to escape a large legal demand" was not acceptable to its own settlement officers.[6] They in fact, were more inclined to accept that under a fluctuating demand the cultivator could clutch on to the hope of getting some /remissions due to Kharābā while this option would be totally closed under a fixed assessment.

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6. Rev.Agri.Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.43, F.53.

Government's desire for a fixed revenue demand needs to be understood in the context of its attempt in this period to consolidate its revenue base through revision of settlements based on new procedures, which were supposedly derived from the experience of the early settlements.[7] But government's general desire to achieve consolidation, did not lessen the dilemma settlement officers faced at the local level in trying to make the most of what could at best be described as a very fluid situation:

> If I propose a fixed demand either on their present irrigation or on the average irrigation of the last seven years, and this demand is a fairly full one, the assessment is bound to break down and be too heavy by the time the canal department have attained the utopia of 70 per cent. If, on the other hand, I assume that the average matured area is 70 per cent and base a fixed assessment on this government will lose very large sums of money during the period that the irrigation of a village now doing 115 per cent of its allotted area is being cut down to 70 per cent. A successful fixed assessment depends on a successful forecast of what is about the average matured area which a village can expect for the cycle for which the assessment is proposed.[8]

Meanwhile, landholders hesitated to accept the fixed demand having "already had too much change." illustrating their point they said:

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7. For a fuller discussion of the different phase of revenue policy in Punjab cf. P.S.M., Douie, 1930, Chapter VI.

8. Rev. Agri. Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.43, F.53, op.cit. Instructions regarding land revenue assessment in the Lower Chenab Canal.

> The government had lately enhanced malikana; subsequently an owner's rate was imposed; now it was proposed to enhance the land revenue and fix the revenue demand, after which it may decide to fix water rates; all this meant new arrangements with tenants and dislocation of agricultural arrangements.[9]

The resistance that government's pressure to impose a fixed assessment met with from landowners has been interpreted as indicative of the power of the elite.[10] Alig argues that:

> fluctuating assessment provided many more opportunities than fixed demand for illegal agreements with subordinate officials: flexibility and uncertainty could be used by the strong for their own interests.[11]

Ali points to the losses of state revenue with regard to both land revenue and water rates, maintaining that:

> it worked against the interests of the rest of the population, by denying public revenues of their due share of profits from the capital invested in the canal projects.[12]

Ali has a point, but it may also be pointed out here that it was unlikely that a shift to fixed assessment would have cut into this big landlord canal bureaucracy network, or, for that matter, that had the state acquired

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9. Ibid.

10. Ali, I., 1982, op.cit., p.25.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

a bigger share as revenue, these would have benefitted the rest of the population. Given the prevailing social inequality, a fixed demand was likely to have further increased the burden on them.

This is supported by the fact that the advocates of a fixed demand were also pressing for a high scale of assessment, arguing that higher assessments would not really injure the mass of the peasant owners while those having reservations on the fluctuating demand itself were quick to point out that a fixed demand would have to be pitched "so low as to entail a very large loss of revenue which is fairly due to government as representing the general tax payer and, even so, would tend to ruin quite a considerable proportion of the cultivators on the Canal, and in short would give rise to evils of greater magnitude than are necessarily attached to a system of fluctuating assessment."[13]

Unable to convince its own officers either way, Punjab retained the system of fluctuating assessment till the 1930s, when a 'sliding scale' based on prices was evolved as a basis of land revenue assessment.

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13. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Evidence, p.192.

Section I - The Trends and Components of Revenue Demands

Trends in Quantum Demanded:

Table 3.1 shows the quantum of revenue demand and increase in the same over a period of years for different districts. Here a few points need to be made. Firstly, the figures bear out the fact that there was a substantial increase in demand over the years. The official contention, nevertheless, remained one of 'leniency' of revenue demand. In fact it was even argued that 'land revenue, measured in rupees, has during the last 35 years only kept pace with the increase in the total cultivated area," and that in order to pay land revenue, a cultivator had to sell, at village prices, "a much smaller fraction of his total produce than he had to sell for this purpose 35 years ago."[14]

Some of the points that emerge from the table may be noted before proceeding further. The early period marked an increase in land revenue despite a fall in cultivated area registered in some districts - Shahpur and Multan specifically. While assessment reports for Montgomery and Gujranwala testify to a similar trend in parts of the district, the extension of cultivation in other parts of the same districts seems to have balanced

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14. Rev.Agri.Rev., Feb.1908, A.Pro.28.

Table: 3.1

INCREASE IN CULTIVATED AREA AND LAND REVENUE

SHAHPUR:

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1875-76	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase in 1875-76
1	2	3	4	5
1875-76	420361	-	418173	-
1883-84	557543	32.63	420786	0.62
1888-89	608609	44.78	421946	0.90
1893-94	651757	55.05	570172	36.35
1897-98	454200	8.05	604814	44.63
1907-08	876167	108.43	911885	118.06
1917-18	1184269	181.73	2283352	446.03
1920-21	1013770	141.17	2219619	430.79
1932-33	1320249	214.08	2543878	508.33
1935-36	1307426	211.02	2318665	454.48
1937-38	1280926	204.72	2346953	461.24

MULTAN:

1875-76	624640	-	541760	-
1883-84	518622	— 16.97	587842	8.50
1888-89	596726	— 4.47	837151	54.52
1893-94	774372	23.97	1043030	92.53
1897-98	973651	55.87	1150565	112.38
1907-08	1089682	74.45	906028	67.24
1917-18	1091207	74.69	1560513	188.05
1920-21	1363692	118.32	1231675	127.35
1932-33	1377615	120.55	2515764	364.37
1935-36	1522554	143.75	4547285	739.35
1937-38	1610140	157.77	5478214	911.19

Cont'd.. Table 3.1

JHANG:	Cultivated area (in acres)	% increase on 1875-1878	Land revenue	% increase on 1875-1878
1875-76	264366	-	294590	-
1883-84	344977	30.49	323326	9.75
1888-89	345651	30.75	367681	24.81
1893-94	393760	48.95	395307	34.19
1897-98	696769	163.56	637705	116.47
1907-08	719348	172.10	751187	154.99
1917-18	726007	174.62	1333119	352.53
1920-21	701446	165.33	1352357	359.06
1932-33	664652	151.41	1349026	337.93
1935-36	701667	165.41	1421599	382.57
1937-38	714194	170.15	1434312	386.88
MONTGOMERY:				
1875-76	420957	-	320761	-
1983-84	365975	- 13.06	297287	- 7.32
1888-89	433024	2.87	292542	- 8.80
1893-94	535115	27.12	370739	15.58
1897-98	467604	11.08	418073	30.34
1907-08	768998	82.68	397530	23.93
1917-18	891588	111.80	1084017	237.95
1920-21	1024585	143.39	3326881	937.18
1932-33	1307071	210.50	3030856	844.90
1935-36	1329540	215.84	4861174	1415.51
1937-38	1446048	243.51	4837690	1408.19

Cont'd.. Table 3 .1

LAHORE:

	Cultivated area	% increase on 1875-76	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% increase on 1875-76
1875-76	1080541	-	648766	-
1883-84	1156385	7.04	691095	6.52
1888-89	1189960	10.13	690220	6.39
1893-94	1246454	15.35	892210	37.52
1897-98	979115	- 9.39	943968	45.50
1907-08	852791	-21.08	1196195	84.38
1916-17	1152805	6.69	1314732	102.65
1920-21	1175040	8.75	1297316	99.97
1932-33	795296	- 29.73	1479660	128.07
1935-36	948195	- 12.25	1545398	138.21
1937-38	906169	- 8.73	1548851	138.74

GUJRANWALA:

1875-76	553482	-	598084	-
1883 -84	606314	9.55	648778	8.48
1888-89	717403	29.62	640525	7.10
1893-94	798926	44.35	741826	24.03
1897-98	719677	30.03	983946	64.52
1907-08	865650	56.40	1162925	94.44
1916-17	1835145	2396.44	2855210	377.39
1920-21	723598	30.74	1620576	170.95
1932-33	750910	35.67	1364868	128.21
1935-36	718785	29.87	1333388	122.94
1937-38	753901	36.21	1464060	144.79

Source : PAR, Relevant years upto 1900.
ASBI, Relevant years, after 1900.

Cont'd.. Table 3.1

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1907-08	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase on 1907-08
LYALLPUR				
1907-08	1227135	-	1154105	-
1916-17	1381962	12.62	5385582	366.65
1920-21	1379539	12.42	5389363	366.97
1932-33	1261386	2.79	5735583	396.97
1935-36	1381098	12.55	6259643	443.92
1937-38	1390165	13.29	5772351	400.16

Note: District formed only in 1904.

	Cultivated area (in acres)	% of increase on 1920-21	Land revenue (in Rs.)	% of increase on 1920-21
SHEIKHUPURA				
1920-21	530686	-	1798822	-
1932-33	746073	40.59	2116031	17.63
1935-36	743927	4018	2186184	21.53
1937-38	753711	42.03	3208154	22.76

Note: District formed only in 1919.

out the trend in the overall district - level figures. A second point that emerges is that while there were years when increase in cultivated area was more than increase in revenue these were fewer, and are likely to have preceded the years just before a fresh settlement was made, the proportion of increase in land revenue generally seems to have surpassed the increase in cultivated area. This seems to stand out all the more sharply in the case of the depression years for nearly all the districts. Despite these facts, the Land Revenue Administration Reports of the 1920s, viz, pre-Depression, drew attention to the 'ease' with which the large sum of over four crores of land revenue was collected. As a reflection of this 'light burden,' the decline in execution of cases of distress even in relatively less prosperous districts such as Gujranwala, were highlighted. Some hastened to add that the people of the province, "who pay this large sum so punctually must be essentially contented."[15]

On the question of the pitch of revenue demand again there were differences within official circles. Whereas, the Chenab Colonisation Officer, Young had insisted that it would be a grave political mistake to press the Colonist too severly, others felt that government was perfectly within its right to raise the demand after the initial years.[16] When

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15. LRARP, 1922, p.2

16. Rev. Agri. Rev., Nov. 1900, Pro 27, F 44, Chenab File,M.

the Chenab Settlement was undertaken in 1915, it was found that the revenue from Rakh Branch circle alone was "in excess of that of any district of the Province except Lyallpur itself," although the area of the circle did not exceed that of an average tahsil.[17] The increase in this circle alone was one of 258%.[18] Not surprisingly, the number of objections and appeals was higher in the circle, despite the Settlement Officer's claim that "the assessment leaves no single settler with a reasonable ground for complaint."[19]

In fact right through our period, objections to assessment proposals, far from being unknown, were fairly common. In Lahore, the time of the 1935-39 settlement, of 309 objections received, all but 15 were rejected. The official reply as in most such cases, attributing objections to discontent engineered by political agitators who, in this particular instance, were alleged to have even "distributed in the village printed forms for objections."[20]

It may be worthwhile to recall here that as far as revenue demand is concerned, the early settlements had been crucial. Many of the later settlement reports recorded that

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17. A.R., Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit, para 1, FC's Review.

18. Ibid.

19. C.S.R., op.cit., p.2

20. S.R., Lahore, 1935-39, p.9

high assessments in the early period had posed serious difficulties for the peasants. The Gujranwala settlement report for 1860, for instance, noted that "notwithstanding a reduction by Mr. Morris of 17% on the summary settlement, the assessment generally was too heavy and it has required considerable modification."[21] It was also pointed out that Mr. Morris had great impediment to overcome, and met with much opposition from the people."[22] Had the problem been merely one of high assessment, it would still have been passable, but what happened in Gujranwala was even more shocking. The Settlement Officer, Temple found that on announcement of the jamās in 1853, "the people were unwilling to enter into any engagements at all for cash payments...." and that many "refused to engage for the government revenue, mainly because of high demand."[23] Temple nonchalantly recorded that the matter was 'amicably' settled with proprietors renouncing their right to the land, and the land was 'transferred' to others. As conceded later:

> "Such resignation was in reality caused by poverty or by the pressure of the assessment, or by the prospect of balances accruing, which the proprietors felt they could not pay. So that in reality these transactions were not essentially different from

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21. S.R., Gujranwala, 1860, p.1.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p.7.

> sale or transfer for realisation of government demands,... Obviously, the effecting of such transfers through the agency and machinery of the settlement office, was not legal. There are processes which the Settlement Officer is by law empowered to use, in the event of proprietors refusing to engage for the assessed revenue, but sale is not among those processes... the result has shown subsequently that when the assessment is so reduced as to render land really valuable the people even in this district, do never wish to resign their rights and that when they become tolerably well to do, they are content to cease to agitate...[24]

In this context the officer expressed concernover how "provoking and contumacious" the people were between 1853 and 1855 and how they "almost behaved like a mob," with sometimes as circle of villages "combining to offer passive resistance to the progress of the settlement."[25]

It may be placed on record that when reductions were announced and old settlers staked their claims, the Lieutenant-Governor ruled that the 'transfers' be set aside and old owners reinstated, with new settlers being compensated elsewhere if necessary.[26]

In Gugera tahsil, Montgomery, similarly, a reduction of over Rs. 15,000 had to be announced two years after the first summary settlement in 1850. But in the course of the subsequent revised settlement the demand was scaled

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. S.R. Gujranwala, 1889-94, p. 14.

again so that the problem continued till in 1892-93 again reductions had to be announced.[27] It was observed that "with a diminishing sailāb and a demand pitched until quite recently at more than the people could pay, collections have been unusually difficult, balances chronic and, recourse to coercive measures frequent."[28] Despite this, in Pakpattan tahsil, also in Montgomery district the demand imposed in 1892 was in parts 81 per cent in excess of the previous settlement.[29]

Components of Revenue Demand

The next question that arises relates to the problem of what was the actual demand on the cultivator? What were the different heads under which the 'surplus' was appropriated from the peasant? To what extent and in what manner did this increase over the years?

Before going into the specifics of revenue demand it is necessary to note that at the beginning of the twentieth century the cultivator in the Colony tracts was perhaps as confounded by the plethora of dues as with the proportion of total demand. Further, the distinctions between these different dues were none too clear to the

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27. A.R. Gugera, Montgomery, 1894, pt.17, p.31.
28. Ibid.
29. S.R. Montgomery, 1892-99, p.81.

peasant or, at times, even to the officials. At the top of the list of heads of demand was land revenue collected from the landowner by the State; he in turn collected rent from the cultivator. On those who had not yet acquired proprietory right, mālikānā was levied; then there was the tirni or grazing tax; kirāya teh zamini, interpreted as the ground rent; there were also various cesses, viz., malbā a local rate, lambardāri dues and chaukidārānā.[30]

A large part of the income to government, however, came from irrigation receipts. These fell under three heads: (a) direct receipts resulting mainly from water rates. (b) Indirect receipts also known as water-advantage rate, nahri partā, owner's rate and so on, and (c) Extra-ordinary receipts, comprising of interest on sale proceeds of crown waste lands in those areas where fresh irrigation had been introduced.

The separation of land revenue and water revenue was a continuation of Prinsep's Scheme, devised in the 1860s during his tenure as Settlement Commissioner. Since the canal water-advantage rate was not uniform, nor fixed - it, therefore, served the purpose of securing to the state a share of the profits arising from the rapid expansion of

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30. This part of the discussion is based on information

canal irrigation.[31] Although it was levied on the land-owner, it was clear right through that if the owner's rate was Rupee 1, it practically authorised the landlord to take double that from the tenant. For this very reason, many within the government opposed the imposition of owner's rate. This opposition was based not so much on concern for the tenant as the fact that the adoption of owner's rate "amounts in practice to the endowment of the landlords with a large portion of the canal revenue."[32] Instead, a revision of water-rates, i.e., occupier's rate, from time to time, was considered proper and expedient. Interestingly, for quite some time the government of Punjab resorted to both options - viz., retention of owner's rate, as well as the periodic revision of water-rates, in 1905, 1912 and in 1924-25. After the abolition of owner's rate however, in 1912, in the Colonies, land revenue became a purely fluctuating assessment levied on the area sown.

The water-rate or occupier's rate, was the price for canal water, levied by an average rate, as per the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act, 1873. By the 1900s it was accepted that differential crop rates were to be imposed, the pitch of the rate being determined by the quality of land which was receiving the amount of water

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31. Ibid.

32. Rev. Agri. Rev., Nov. 1900, Pro. 27, F-44, Chenab File M., p.32.

ordinarily required to ripen a particular crop, and the additional value of the outturn of the crop per acre due to irrigation. This was ascertained by comparing the rents per acre paid by tenants-at-will in the same area for nahri and barani lands.[33]

Of the other dues mālikānā was collected as per the statement of conditions made at the time of allotments. This too was a rate levied per acre. Theoretically, mālikānā was to be 4% of the market value of land in its waste condition or a sum not less than half the land revenue. On the Lower Chenab Canal, however, it was fixed at 6 annas for the first ten years and 9 annas thereafter till proprietory right was attained. On the Lower Jhelum Canal mālikānā was fixed at 4 annas.[34] Lambardāri fees amounted to 5% of the land revenue in the Chenab.[35] The malbā was cess imposed by landowners on themselves to meet common village expenses incurred to maintain certain basic services. While at times the patwāri kept malbā accounts, this was not always the case, and the villagers were free to make their own arrangements.[36]

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33. Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, A, Pro-24, F. 14.
34. P.C.M., Wace, 1933, p. 187.
35. C.C.G., 1904, p. 145.
36. P.S.M., 1930, op.cit., p. 50

Thorburn discusses the origin of the cesses, highlighting that in fact cesses were devised as an indirect means of enhancing demand on the peasants. Tracing the matter back to 1871, Thorburn points out that the 'local rate' for instance had its roots in a decision whereby Punjab was asked by GOI to contribute £120,000 each year towards the famine insurance fund. This amount was to be raised from the peasantry - "they being prosperous, lightly assessed, accustomed to bear burdens without murmering and, prospectively, the chief beneficiaries from the tax."[37] However, since it was not possible to raise revenue in the middle of a settlement term :

> "the legal difficulty was surmounted by calling the enhancement a 'cess', accordingly an additional 'local rate' cess of 6% on the land revenue was legalised and levied."[38]

Thorburn maintained that :

> "its imposition was morally indefensible, and the government was roundly accused of a breach of faith. The distinction between a 'cess - a rate levied on the land revenue - and an enhancement of that revenue was explained, but such caustic refinement was incomprehensive to simple Punjabis, who did not care what the Collector might call the component parts of their rating provided that its aggregate was not raised whilst a settlement was running."[39]

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37. Thorburn, 1883, p.236.

Apart from these, officially, no cess could be levied, not even with the concurrence of the people from whom it was realised, without the previous consent of the Government of India.

However, the position with regard to cesses varied from district to district. Thus in Gujranwala district two trends were noted at the same time (a) uniformity in the cesses as a result of the settlement as compared to the old system whereby the patwāris and zaildārs were remunerated by a varying percentage on the land revenue of their circles or zails and (b) persistence of considerable variation in incidence of cess demand even in adjoining villages.[40] A later settlement report noted a decrease in cesses in this district from about 21% in 1890s to 13½ % in 1913, through abolition of patwāri cess-5%, ālā lambardāri 1% and a reduction of 1/5 in local rate.[41] Multan, on the other hand, was witness to the phenomenon of cesses "climbing up".[42] While at the first regular settlement cesses amounted to Rs. 10-2-0% of the land revenue, and Rs. 13% at the revised settlement this was later raised to Rs. 20-14-8 and by the time of the 1901 settlement these had come upto Rs. 21-10-8%.[43] Shahpur district had by 1897 recorded an increase of about 8% in cesses on the regular settlement of 18 from Rs. 19-6-8%

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40. S.R., Gujranwala, 1889-94, op.cit.
41. S.R., Gujranwala, 1913, p.34.
42. S.R., Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.32.
43. Ibid.

to Rs. 25-0-0%.[44] But in this district too the abolition of patwāri cess and famine cess in the 20th century, resulted in a reduction of cess.[45]

This apart, a gradual change that came about in the course of Colonisation in the Chenab Colony was that malbā which was a fund for common village expenses paid by all to the village headman who administered it on behalf of the rest, came to be administered by the state, and the Colonies Committee went so far as to suggest that a permissive clause be added to grants to enable government to sanction a malbā cess and that "provision for malbā ought, in the case of future Colonies, to be made in the statement of conditions."[46] Complaints were also received alleging that Colonists in many cases were not receiving payment for labour spent in silt clearance of government channels.[47] Officials took refuge under the argument that money had been disbursed but had probably failed to reach the complainants.

Tirni and kirāya tah zamini were other demands made on cultivators and other residents, which aroused widespread resentment and discontent. Of these, tirni, had its origins in Afghan rule and appears to have been retained by the Sikh rulers with the object of making professional cattle-

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44. S.R., Shahpur, 1897, p.30.

45. S.R., Shahpur, 1916, p.30.

46. C.C.R., p.760.

47. Ibid.

breeders, "who did not otherwise contribute to the expenses of the state, share in the burdens of the rest of the population. Agricultural cattle were exempt from taxation."[48] Sheep and goats, however, had always been taxed.

Unfortunately, however, the British, while taking on the earlier practice of tirni, lost sight of the real purpose behind exemption of agricultural cattle from taxation and proceeded to levy the tax on these as well. As a consequence income from tirni which in 1857-58 was a little under Rs. 32,000 had risen by 1872-73 to Rs. 1,08,009 and by 1881-82 to Rs. 1,48,000.[49] The method of collection at this time was through farming out of tirni contracts to zaildārs etc., who in turn engaged with villages on the basis of a rate per head. In the 1890s, the contract was fixed on a five-yearly basis. While officially everything seemed to have been put in order through livestock surveys and the quinquennial tirni assessment, the fact was that there were many loopholes. Thus, while officially tirni was an optional levy in effect it was not so, since under the system followed, entire villages were declared tirni-guzār or ghair-tirni-guzār.[50]

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48. C.C.G., op.cit., p.20.

49. Ibid.

50. S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.165.

The settlement report for Jhang noted that "it is compulsory and it is doubtful whether the compulsion is legitimate."[51] It was pointed out that the tax was also levied on old settlers whose villages were located within the vast area now appropriated as goverment wastes, and these settlers were being made to pay for what had originally been rightfully theirs.[52] It was much later that agricultural cattle was made exempt from tirni.

Kirāya tah zamini was similarly resented, being looked upon as "quite a new and frightful thing."[53] In their evidence before the Colonies' Committee, there were hardly any among the Colonists who did not complain about it. The levy, charged as a ground rent for house-building sites, was opposed by Colonists who argued that they should be deemed owners of the site on which they built their houses.[54] Sayad Mahdi Shah, Honorary Magistrate, Chenab Colony, further argued that artisans and menials, such as blacksmiths, weavers, mirasis, cobblers, washerman, dyers, scavengers, and others should be exempt from payment of the levy since the "founding of a village is impossible without these menials."[55] Rai Bahadur (later Sir) Ganga Ram, describing it as a "most

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51. S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.165.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, A, Pro 1-4, Answers File, p. 270.
55. Ibid.

obnoxious tax and highly distasteful," pointed to the fact that its abolition would facilitate increase in population and afford greater facilities to zamindars to harvest and put many more at their disposal for agricultural work.[56]

The tax, never levied on the Jhelum Canal, yielded an annual income of about Rs. 1 lakh on the Chenab, while its critics pointed out that in non-Colony villages proprietors did not make any such demand on their tenants.[57]

SECTION II

Policy Regarding Revenue Reassessment

A study of available assessment and settlement reports reveals that till about the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a level of complacency with regard to returns from land revenue since extension of canal irrigation to new lands itself yielded enormous returns. This is not to argue that attempts were not made at the time of settlement to raise revenue demand, but after the initial disasters of the summary settlements, the period upto 1910 was marked by a note of caution. Till then there were occasions when after a preliminary survey reassessment operations were shelved. In Sharakpur, for example, the settlement officer pressed for status quo,

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56. Ibid., p.219.

57. Ibid.

if not relief, since several estates in the region had been ruined due to "continued pressure of a revenue demand beyond their capacity."[58] The Chenab Circle of Hafizabad tahsil, Gujranwala also escaped reassessment since the district officers were insistent in pointing out that the area had not witnessed any increase in production.[59] Gugera tahsil in Montgomery could not escape an increased demand but none less than the Chief Secretary himself remarked that the assessments, "even as finally sanctioned, were higher than it was quite prudent to take" in view of its past history and the serious danger of driftage of tenants to the Chenab Colony.[60] Such comments were hardly ever forthcoming in later assessment reports.

While the advance of Colonisation ensured a fair amount of financial stability, it also raised another problem - of maintaining an ever-increasing flow of revenue returns. Settlement operations in the colonial set-up, therefore were the scene of a tussle between the state which asserted that it was losing out on heavy investments that it had made in canals; the landlord posing as the aggrieved party vis-a-vis both the tenant below and the state above him; the tenant at the other end, trying to

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58. Reassessment Survey, Sharakpur, Gujranwala, 1909.
59. Rev. Agri. Rev., October 1903, A, Pro 1, F. 40.
60. Rev. Agri. Rev., October, 1894, File 9(5).

ward off any increase in demand on him but ultimately almost always losing the battle over the surplus at best, or for survival, at worst. As is the case in any such tussle, both the state and the landlord posed as champions of the poor tenant in order to present their own case in a favourable light.

An important aspect of settlement was the scale on which revision of demand was undertaken - for, a sudden increase often came down very heavily on the peasant. On this question the Government of Punjab took a more tough position vis-a-vis even the Government of India, and successfully evaded till 1928, any limit on proportion of increase at the time of new settlement.

In a comprehensive Resolution on Land Revenue Policy, dated 16.1.1902, Government of India specifically discussed the question, whether, "save in exceptional cases, the Settlement Officer should be guided by rules preventing him from enhancing above a certain percentage." Maclagan, Revenue Secretary, was of the view that if a Settlement Officer proposed to assess above the limit the onus should be on him to prove that exceptional circumstances justified such an increase. In 1911 he again wrote to the Government of Punjab, expressing his concern at the "evils resulting from a large and sudden increase in land revenue when the economic conditions of a district or other large tract have

adapted themselves to a lower scale of assessment."[61] By this time, in many other provinces, rules had been framed, with varying degrees of definiteness and liberality, to prevent "serious hardship by deferring for a period of years the imposition of the full assessment that theoretical considerations might justify, so as to enable the revenue-payers to adjust their arrangements to the impending curtailment of their income."[62]

The Punjab Government differed. Fenton, Revenue Secretary, Punjab wrote back to Maclagan that any rule which fixed a maximum percentage of enhancement would be 'fatal' to all Colonisation schemes. He argued that these tracts had earlier been the home of nomad graziers who clustered around a few wells and, to regard the revenue assessed then as a factor determining the ultimate land revenue of the Colony was obviously a "palpable absurdity."[63] He believed that "where 10 rupees was paid before, 100 rupees would be paid without any compunction, notwithstanding that the increase was one of 1000%."[64] Others who supported him, pointing to the remittances and expansion of trade etc.,

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61. Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, Pro 36, F-17.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Rev. Agri. Rev., January 1910, Pro 48-A.

argued that Punjab hardly presented a case for "experiments in artificial restrictions in assessing the share due to government, especially since almost the whole of this prosperity was due to improvements made and maintained by the state."[65]

Reassessment at a higher rate remained one of the main instruments of increasing demand and it was only in 1928 that legislation to restrict the scale of enhancements at the time of each settlement to not more than 25% was adopted in Punjab.

In this exercise of reassessment, various methods were resorted to so as to justify an enhanced revenue demand. Reclassification of land was one such method. Whereas earlier land revenue demand was based on calculations revolving around averages, by the time the Lower Chenab Colony lands fell due for settlement, there was a change in official thinking. Whereas from the 1880s onwards assessment circles were more clearly related to adventitious factors of rainfall, irrigation and water-supply, as compared to class of soil, by 1910 it was being conceded, that even the notion of a 'fair average demand' remained questionable for :

> "it could be easily paid in an ordinary year by the peasant whose square has given him an average crop; it will be a very light demand for the man

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65. Ibid.

> whose square is above average and whose crops are good, but it will be a crushingly heavy demand for the man who has inferior land..."[66]

The Canal Colonies Committee report also recommended differential rates by land, consequently, subsequent settlements recorded greater details regarding soil variations (Chapter I, supra).

Reclassification marked an even later stage in this process, when land earlier classified in one category was moved into a higher category for purposes of assessment. The reason advanced for this was that "improvement in land had occurred through the assiduous attention of high class cultivators and the levelling up tendency induced by cooling of soil and greater stabilisation of irrigation."[67] Since reclassification generally, though not invariably, led to land moving into a higher category, it resulted in a net increase in revenue demand. Thus on the Upper Jhang Branch, the Settlement Officer recorded that giving full play to the principle of differentiation of squares had enabled him "to put the bulk of the area of certain villages which were let off too highly before into higher classes."[68] Sometimes, by this process, there was no land left in the

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66. Rev. Agri. Rev., 1909, Pro 1-4, Evidence, p. 592.

67. A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit.

68. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.23.

lowest category.[69] In Lyallpur tahsil it was observed that there was a "marked tendency of the land in the bottom classes to move up in the scale."[70] In Samundri similarly, an "upward trend" was noted resulting in an "appreciable increase" so that the highest acreage could be found in Classes I, II and III.[71]

The whole exercise however, remained a bone of contention for it was really a part of the cultivator's struggle to retain a larger share for himself, and the state's to get a higher share of the produce for itself by classifying the land as being of better quality and, therefore, producing more. That officers acted with undue haste at times becomes clear from repeated instructions given to them that "no square should be transferred for assessment purposes into a higher class until the Collector has satisfied himself at two successive quinquennial inspections that a square has really improved."[72] It was repeatedly emphasised that it was against the spirit of the Land Revenue Act to place during the currency of the new settlement any square in a class higher than that in which it will now be placed and so increase the assessment now imposed."[73] But it was

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69. Cf., A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1936, op.cit., p.23.
70. Rev. Agri, Rev., August 1914, A, Pro. 9, F.368.
71. A.R., Samundri, 1936, p.32.
72. Financial Commissioner's order on Rakh Branch Circle Sheikhupura tahsil and district. A.R..Lahore. 1939.op.cit.

precisely this injunction which perhaps led to large scale reclassification at the time of assessment itself. Even jangli chaks, usually comprising of inferior lands, were not spared and the reports while normally chiding them for their lack of industriousness, at such moments found it necessary to record that the assessment of these chaks had to be raised in recognition of the progress made by them."[74] It may be noted that 'reclassification' featured more prominently in the operations of the 1930s - at a time when cultivators were pressing for reduction of revenue demand owing to the prolonged slump.[75]

Conflict vis-a-vis reclassification however, surfaced at two levels - firstly, between landholders and the state, and secondly, amongst the landholders themselves. The Settlement Officer, Lyallpur for example, when under attack from "unkind critics", for manipulation in classification of squares, observed that infact there was opposition to the whole exercise from "proprietors of leniently assessed chaks and, generally speaking, the more influential men who happen to hold good land and who are at present not paying a full assessment."[76] They officials pointed out, often turned out

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74. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.24.

75. A.R., Lyallpur, Samundri and Toba Tek Singh Tahsils of Lyallpur district, op.cit., Passim

76. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.26.

to be the most ardent advocates of maintenance of status quo. Thus, in Lyallpur, in some chaks where all squares were previously assessed to one revenue rate, the more dominant proprietors with squares considerably above the average run of the chak pressed for imposition of a sarsari partā once again: "a feigned cloak of complete harmony in the proprietory body was put forward as justification for this course... No owner whose square is raised to a higher class will admit that it was thoroughly inspected, or that its new higher class is justified."[77] The officers advanced the plea that present classification if allowed to remain unchanged would not be in consonance with approved settlement principles for the success of the settlement lay in the "degree of fairness with which the demand is distributed over holdings."[78] Problems however remained on this count. As noted at one point, reassessment could be used to raise the pitch of demand but it "did not remove the inequalities of assessment between estates."[79] This was illustrated by the fact that a number of Rakh Branch estates were assessed in 1912 at

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77. Ibid., p.24.

78. Ibid., p.23.

79. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.24.

at Class III rates while Jhang Branch chaks similarly circumstanced were assessed in 1921 at Class II or even Class I rates.[80]

The village survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman shows that the land revenue in the village till 1911 was eight annas per acre. Adding to it the other dues, for water etc. the total demand per acre worked out to Rs. 2-4-0. In 1925-26 the land revenue demand alone was Rs. 5-0-8 - while the total demand was Rs. 10-10-0 indicating that while at the beginning of the century land revenue was a very small component of total demand, by 1926 the proportion of land revenue in total demand has gone up considerably.[81] The survey also recorded that while earlier land was only categorised as barani or nahri, in 1921 classification by soil was also adopted.[82]

In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, the incidence per cultivated acre of fixed land revenue increased from Rs. 0-5-3 to Rs. 1-3-5 between 1853 and 1912-13. In 1925-26 however the records showed a decline with incidence per acre coming

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80. Ibid.

81. BEIP, P.V.S. 4, 1932, pp.67-68.

82. Ibid.

to only 0-14-2 this fall being attributed to an alteration in the method of assessment" rather than a reduction in demand.[83] The fluctuating revenue, for irrigation rose from a total amount of Rs.61-0-0 in 1912-13 recording an all-time high of Rs. 249-6-0 in 1921-22, being Rs. 103-11-0 in 1925-26."[84]

It was with this in mind that differential land revenue and occupiers' rates were adopted from 1910 onwards. We give below (Table 3.2) the rates adopted on the Lower Chenab Canal in the first round of settlement nd those adopted in the 1930s for the Lyallpur district tahsils which also included some of the earlier circles.

Table 3.2

Rates by Class of Land - 1924 and 1940
Lyallpur District

	1924	1940
Class I	6-0-0	7- 8-0
Class II	5-8-0	6-12-0
Class III A	5-0-0	6- 0-0
Class III B	4-8-0	5- 8-0
Class IV A	4-0-0	4-12-0
Class IV B	3-8-0	4- 4-0
Class V A	3-0-0	3- 8-0
Class V B	2-8-0	3- 0-0
Class VI	2-0-0	2- 4-0

Source : 1. A.R.Lyallpur, p.24.
2. A.R.Samundi, p.34.
3. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, p.24

Calendar of Revenue Payment

Another aspect that needs to be looked into is the timing of revenue instalments. Government maintained that local authorities exercised flexibility in the timing of revenue payment viz., the kharif instalment was to be paid in the month of January or February, and the rabi in June or July. The exact dates were announced by the Tahsildār who was bound to give at least one month's notice. The village survey of Kala Gaddi Thamman testifies that when questioned about this the cultivators expressed the opinion that for kharif payments any date after the middle of February was more suitable while for Rabi the first or second week of July was better, for otherwise there was no time to take the wheat to the market. Flexibility regarding the date was also desirable since the convenience of the cultivator depended largely on the harvest. Thus in a year of a good cotton crop, the kharif instalment in January could be paid with relative ease whereas in a bad cotton year when the cultivators dependence on toriā to pay revenue increased, a date in the middle of February might have been more convenient.[85]

In contrast to this opinion expressed by the cultivators and endorsed by the investigator, between 1918-19 and 1926-27, in 4 harvests out of 9 kharif payment had

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85. BEIP, P.V.S., 4, op.cit., p.70.

been due and collected before the 15th of January, in two years in the latter half of January, while in the remaining three also payments had been due before the 14th of February - in contrast with the opinion expressed in favour of kharif instalment being due after mid-February. In the case of Rabi out of 8 harvests for which details were available, 6 years payments had been made in the month of June and the other two on the first and second days of July as against the first or second week of July preferred by the cultivators.[86]

That the grievance of the cultivators was not entirely baseless was supported by the comments of the Deputy Commissioner Lahore Division. Confessing to the problem faced in collecting the rabi demand he wrote that the reason perhaps was that the "period between the harvesting of the rabi and the date fixed for payment of revenue is not sufficient to allow the zamindars to dispose of their wheat properly..."[87] He, however, also felt that in the case of the kharif, it was perhaps the other way round which provided baniās with an opportunity to take away the produce even before the state demand was met.[88] He accepted that to "insist upon payments before the

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86. Ibid.

87. LRARP. 1901, p.1 (extracts from district reports).

88. Ibid.

revenue payers have had ample time to arrange for them inflicts hardship."[89] The importance of the harvest calendar, and the revenue gist or instalment with regard to its impact on the peasantry has been highlighted in a recent study of peasant production in Colonial India with respect to sugarcane cultivation in Gorakhpur district in the United Provinces.[90] Amin draws attention to the complex relationship between the peasantry and their harvest cycle, the compulsion to seasonal borrowing in view of their low absolute sum of cash income which was inadequate to meet the requirements of foodgrains, seed and cash for rent, the rigidity of the timing of revenue payment struck particularly hard in such circumstances. Amin rightly emphasises that:

> the function of money as a means of payment on a particular date was the vantage point for the penetration of usurious capital.[91]

Canal/Non-Canal Lands

Another harsh fact of Colonisation was the impact canal irrigation had on those lands which were not provided with canal water to begin with. The importance attached to irrigation and its price in a way led to neglect of those lands which were not getting water and,

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89. Ibid.

90. Amin, S., 1985, op.cit., pp.69 ff.

91. Ibid., p.80.

therefore, not paying for it. Contrary to general impressions in many such instances, the incidence of revenue demand actually went up in the face of decline in quantity and value of the produce:

> the people have gradually devoted more and more attention to their valuable canal crops and neglected the cultivation of the uncommanded land with the result that in many villages the incidence of the portion of the village has become absurdly high.92

The assessment report for Deg Circle, Gugera tahsil, Montgomery, focussed attention on the non-Colony tracts in the early period. The tenants in this case had left for more prosperous tracts, consequently the villages were increasingly becoming "over-assessed". Here it was found that "revenue was collected" with difficulty. At times proprietors themselves worked as labourers on the neighbouring canal tracts, very often coercive proceedings were started and the settlement officer concluded that while there was very little scope for enhancement at reassessment, "in some villages reductions are urgently required".[93] Even so, when the settlement was announced, Douie, Chief Secretary, found that the revenue demand sanctioned was "higher than it was quite prudent to take in view of the past revenue history of

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92. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1908, A.Pro.17, F.10.

93. A.R., Gugera, Montgomery 1894, op.cit., p.15.

the tahsil the character of the agricultural population, and the serious danger of driftage of tenants from the well lands to the Chenab Canal..."[94]

In Gujranwala, the 1906 settlement report gave the following figures for the average incidence on matured area.

Table 3.3

Average Incidence on Matured Area, in Different Circles 1900 to 1903

	Average incidence per acre	Variation in village incidence
1. Bar, Canal-irrigated	0-10-10	0-4-2 to 1-3-8
2. Bar, non-canal-irrigated	1-3-10	0-12-5 to 2-10-6
3. Bangar, Canal-irrigated	1-2-3	0-6-0 to 1-12-9
4. Bangar, non-canal-irrigated	1-9-66	1-3-9 to 4-4-6
5. Chenab Circle	1-7-66	-

Source: S.R. Gujranwala, 1906, p.7

The report mentioned that many objections were received to the assessment proposals but hardly any entertained. This state of affairs seems to have continued till about the late 1920s, when the settlement officer was specifically instructed to "shift the burden from those who were no longer able to bear it to those who had

94. Ibid.

prospered greatly."[95] The way in which this was to be achieved was by lowering the rates for chahi and barani lands and raising the assessment on nahri crops.

Section III - Standard of Assessment: Theory and Practice

What was the basis on which land revenue was assessed in the first place? What considerations were influential in fixing the demands? The standard of assessment of land revenue was a fixed proportion of the net produce or net assets. In the 1870s Egerton, Financial Commissioner had advocated the use of gross assets or gross produce to calculate the revenue demand. However, the use of net assets as the basis of assessing revenue came to be the established practice. In the course of instructions issued by Government of India in 1893 and again in 1914, it was clarified that net assets referred to "the average surplus which the estate may yield after deduction of the expenses of cultivation".[96]

Any income which the proprietors derived from the "spontaneous products of their waste and uncultivated lands and, strictly speaking any dues of whatever sort which they get in their capacity of landowners", was included in the "net assets".[97]

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95. S.R. Gujranwala, 1927.

96. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1893, A.Pro.21, F-100 of 1892. Revised draft of Assessment Instructions.

97. Ibid.

While this definition was generally acceptable, the problem that remained was one of establishing how net assets were to be calculated. As per the instructions it was clarified that "a full, fair rent paid by a tenant-at-will, though sometimes falling short of the net assets may, generally in practice and for purposes of assessment be taken as a sufficiently near approximation to them on the land for which it is paid..."[98]

Since so much depended on the calculation of net assets, the settlement officer was entrusted with the duty of framing the "most careful estimate" possible of net assets and it was categorically stated that to manipulate the estimate in any way with a view to diminish the divergence between it and the proposed demand was "tantamount to dishonesty".[99] All the assessment reports consequently, devote considerable attention to this task of calculating 'net assets' and a land revenue demand based on "half net assets".

The pressure exercised by the provincial government on the district officers in this matter was not to be ignored. Thus in his comment on the report for the Upper Jhang Branch, Lower Chenab Colony, the Lieutenant Governor chastised the officers for the,

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98. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1892, A.Pro.17, F.100.

99. P.S.M., op.cit., p.168.

> almost heroic efforts which the assessing officers have made to keep down the produce estimate

attributing it to the old problem of:

> a settlement officer animated by the fullest sympathy for his landholders, adjusting his estimates unconsciously in order to suit the assessment which he thinks he can take. It is a practice which has been strongly denounced by the Punjab Government since 1889 and, I can only hope that the Financial Commissioner will see to it that it is not revived again...[100]

Till 1928, the principle of half-net assets remained the bulwark of assessment policy. All other questions such as proportion of enhancement etc. were considered of secondary importance. The Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act III of 1928, however, laid down guidelines for the amount of enhancement permissible, the period of settlement etc. More important, however, was the fact that the Act "lowered the maximum standard of assessment from one-half of net assets to one fourth."[101] It also limited the "increase permissible in any assessment circle to 25 per cent, over the former assessment, except where canal irrigation has been introduced since the last assessment was imposed."[102] At the same time, the period of assessment was fixed at 40 years, except in undeveloped tracts.[103]

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100. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit., p.30.

101. P.S.M., op.cit., p.46.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

The second problem, related to the fact that cash rents formed the basis of calculating the net assets of a landowner. It was widely accepted that cash rents fulfilled the criterion of competitive rents. However, for a large part of Colony land leased to tenants, rents were produce rents fixed in quantity and in such cases calculations became difficult on account of variations in prices over a period of years. For produce rents fixed as a share of the crop also the problem came up since the quality of value of crop, quantity and price, all three were variable. Government accepted that in most districts of Punjab "difficulties of this latter kind are met with".[104] It further found itself making hypothetical calculations in the case of petty proprietors. At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that cash rents were primarily paid by tenants-at-will, who invariably paid higher rents.[105] In such a situation it is clear that with calculation of half-net assets on the basis of an average derived from cash rents, those landowners holding better quality land offering higher outturn stood to gain vis-a-vis government. Whether this benefit trickled down to the tenants will be discussed later.

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104. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1893, A.Pro.21, F.100. Revised Draft of Assessment Instruction for the Punjab.

105. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1892, A.Pro.1-7, F.100, Enclosure A.

Many pointed out that calculation of net assets on the basis of cash rents was full of hazards:

> As cash rents are practically non-existent, the rental has to be calculated from a valuation of the produce rents which are found to be paid by tenants-at-will in this district on 59 per cent of the total area of cultivation. The calculation is an exceedingly difficult one, and at every step assumptions have to be made on the correctness of which the reliability of the whole account depends. These assumptions, moreover, are based on no very secure foundations as it is necessary to reduce to an average which can be included in the account conditions which in themselves are difficult to ascertain and which vary from year to year and season to season.[106]

A similar sentiment was conveyed by Government of India to Government of Punjab at the time the first round of settlements on the Lower Chenab Canal was on. The Revenue Secretary, Government of India, wrote to Punjab, pointing out that:

> less than 4 per cent of the total cultivated area of the tract is let on a fixed cash rent, and that the estimate of Rs.200 as the average rent of a square is based on the rents recorded for this small proportion of the total area. In provinces where cash rents are more common than in the Punjab, it is recognised that it is very unsafe to assume that correct deductions can be drawn from competition rents paid over small areas, and cash rents paid by tenants-at-will are, therefore, dealt with very cautiously... Where the cash rented area is so small as in the Colonies, it will almost certainly be found that the worst lands for the lands that are most disadvantageously situated in regard to water-supply, or in other respects, are not taken up on cash rents at all. The assumption that the high rents paid on a twenty-fifth of the whole area can be used for the

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106. S.R. Jhang, 1906, op.cit., p.18.

> valuation of the rest is dangerous, and the Government of India are unable to accept it even as an estimate in calculations affecting the assessment of the tract as a whole.[107]

Even when it came to areas that were paying cash rents, it was not necessary that the net assets assumed for assessment purposes represented the actual situation. In Lyallpur district for instance the circle rate per cultivated acre for purposes of assessment was much above the existing cash rent rate on Jangli chaks:

Table 3.4

Net Assets on Janglie and Other Chaks

Tahsil/Circle	1/4 net assets per cultivated acre on select cash rents Rs. A. Ps.	Same, for Jangli chaks only Rs. A. Ps.	Circle rate per cultivated acre on new demand finally imposed Rs. A. Ps.
Lyallpur	7-0-7	5-6-8	6-6-1
Samundri	5-14-4	5-2-9	5-14-10
Toba Tek Singh	5-9-0	4-7-3	5-1-5
Jaranwala	6-5-8	-	6-7-0
New Extensions	2-11-0	-	4-6-4
Rakh Branch (in Sheikhupura)	5-15-0	5-4-10	5-9-3

Source: S.R., Lyallpur, 1940, op.cit., p.29.

Table III.5 gives the results of assets calculation for different circles on the basis of different estimates. In every case the cash rent basis yields a higher estimate.

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107. Rev.Agri.Rev., July 1909, A.Pro.44-45.

Table: 3.5

NET ASSETS ESTIMATES ON DIFFERENT BASIS:

a. Gugera Branch I:

	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Nahri, Half Net Assets by Produce Estimate	4	3	7
2. -do- Cash Rents	4	8	0
3. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	11	2

Source: A.R., Gugera Branch I, L.C.C., 1911.

b. Upper Jhang Branch:

1. Half Net assets by kind rents on maturedarea in 1908-09	3	10	0
2. Half Net assets by Cash Rents on maturedarea in 1908-09	4	7	0
3. Half Net Assets by cash Rents on maturedarea between 1902-10	4	9	8
4. Half Net Assets by kind Rents as calculated by Financial Commissioner	3	10	6
5. Half Net Assets by cash Rents as calculated by Financial Commissioner	4	6	10
6. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	2	1

Source: A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, L.C.C., 1911.

c. Jhang Branch I, II and III:

	J.B. I	J.B.II	J.B:III
1. Half Net assets by kind rents	3 10 0	3 1 3	2 14 6
2. Half Net Assets by cash rents for 5 years	4 9 8	3 5 6	3 0 2
3. Half Net Assets by cash rents in 1909-10	-	4 1 6	3 8 0
4. One-sixth value of gross produce	3 2 1	2 15 6	2 13 9

Source: A.R., Jhang Branch III, L.C.C., 1911.

d. GUJERA BRANCH II:

1. Half Net assets by kind Rents	4	3	8
2. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1905-06	3	14	5
3. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1909-10	6	1	3
4. Half Net assets by cash rents in 1910-11	7	12	3
5. One-sixth value of gross produce	3	7	2

Source: A.R., Gugera Branch II, L.C.C., 1912.

Cont'd.. Table 3 .5

e. Rakh Branch:

	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Half Net assets on matured area by kind rents	6	0	8
2. Half Net assets on sown area	5	9	6
3. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rent 1909-10	6	4	1
4. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rents 1910-11	6	4	3
5. Half Net assets on matured area by cash rents 1911-12	7	4	1
6. One-sixth value of gross produce	4	12	10

Source: A.R., Rakh Branch, L.C.C., 1913.

This is likely to result from the estimates being based on cash rents on the best lands. As in the case of the Jangli tracts referred to in the above table, the results based on rental returns on land other than the best are likely to have been lower. But these obviously did not form the basis of estimates since, as emphasised, the idea was to derive estimates on the basis of "competition rates".

Yields formed an important aspect of calculation of net assets. Thus it was found that in Lahore district, for instance, "in all cases yield assumed for calculation of net assets on nahri land has gone up".[108] The settlement officer, Lyallpur, admitted that the high yield estimates assumed at last settlement in both Toba Tek Singh and Samundri tahsils had proved to be an instance of "belied hope".[109] In Toba Tek Singh while cotton yields on lands possessed by good Arain cultivators were 6 maunds per acre, and only 4 maunds in most of the tail villages, the settlement officer assumed a yield of 5 maunds.[110] Table 3.6 gives the yields assumed for the four tahsils in Lyallpur district.

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108. A.R. Lahore, 1939, op.cit., p.17.

109. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.23.

110. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.16.

Table 3.6

Yields Assumed in 4 Tahsils of Lyallpur District

Commodity	Jaranwala Mds.	Lyallpur Mds.	Samundri Mds.	Toba Tek Singh Mds.
Sugarcane	25	25 (30)	23	20
Cotton:				
American	6½	6½	6	5
Desi	6½	6½	6	5
Maize	14	14	13	12
Wheat	14	14	13½	12
Toria	8	8	7½	6
Gram	11	11	10	9

Source: A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1937, p.18.

Revenue - Price Nexus

All the while, that land assessment was being successfully revised, there were two assumptions the Punjab government was basing itself on:

(a) extension of irrigation and the fact that an irrigated area yielded a higher produce in addition to ensuring security of agriculture.

(b) a continuous rise in prices - in fact the existence of boom level prices - affected, among other things by improvement in communications.

These two factors influenced the understanding evolved in the Colony tracts, of assuming both, a higher quantity of outturn and, a higher value of crops.

However, it was precisely in these two spheres that the cracks began to appear. While the position regarding irrigation will be discussed in the next section, we examine here the revenue-rising prices nexus. Which was exemplified in the sliding scale system adopted as a basis for the post-depression settlements.

Firstly, it was ironical that the sliding scale-oriented to a situation of rising prices - was drawn up at a time when the rural economy was yet to recover from the devastation of the depression years. The scale, evolved with the intention of facilitating adjustment of demand with prices highlighted what government had in any case pinned its hopes on for the last three decades - i.e. the 'price boom'. The fact that in the mid-1930s the 'boom' seemed more like a bubble did not deter the government from its optimism. Since the proposed settlement was to be for a period of forty years the only 'concession' made was to defer the application of the new scale till such time as 'prices were back to normal".[111]

Although the sliding scale was not applied in the course of the period being studied, nevertheless it throws light on questions being examined here. An essential feature of the new scale was the drawing up of a full demand - equivalent to 100 in index numbers, which would be collected in a year of normal prices. Normal

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111. A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

price was for this purpose construed as correspondence of the general level of market prices for the whole year with the level of commutation prices. Commutation prices, in turn, were worked on the basis of an average of forty years. By government's own admission, the sliding scale "necessarily involved assumption of comparatively high commutation prices;"[112] This was despite settlement officers being told to guard against a common weakness which led to attribution of "a greater degree of stability" to existing conditions than they actually possessed; it was accepted that in the case of prices one was "apt to assume a permanent rise or a permanent fall, and it is quite possible to mistake the effects of short harvests for those of extended markets."[113] In this context, 'short harvests' referred to the depression years. The fact that the effects of the depression extended far beyond that of 'short harvests' in scale or dimension was conveniently lost sight of. This apart, it was emphasised that if prices fell, the system was geared to giving relief automatically - through comparison of the index figure for the previous year with the standard index figure. The standard index figure in turn was a multiple of (a) the percentage of specific crops on total per holding. (b) outturn in maunds and (c) commutation prices in annas per maund.[114]

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112. Ibid., p.27.

113. P.S.M., op.cit.

114. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.27.

The government hoped to achieve two primary objectives with the introduction of the sliding scale. Firstly, the adjustment of land revenue to existing conditions with provision for giving relief as and when considered necessary; secondly, to ensure for itself a sizeable share of economic benefit as and when prices rose again. To that end the sliding scale as a basis of revenue assessment was definitely an advance on the previous system. It approximated a balance between a fixed and fluctuating demand on a more rational basis. However, what is more important at this point is the discussion revolving around the introduction of the sliding scale - for this brings into focus the true nature of the 'concessions' and 'liberality' that government continually boasted of.

First, the concession: Presumably in keeping with its earlier pronouncements and show of leniency even as re-assessment operations were being completed, it was announced that:

> for five years with effect from the harvest in which the new assessment is introduced, they (it) will not take more than the current demand gives even if under the sliding scale system it is permissible to take more.[115]

This show of magnanimity government hoped, would assist recovery in the even of prices rising. For an

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115. Ibid., pro.3, p.2.

imperial government this appeared to be the supreme sacrifice - 'loss' of revenue that it had a right to claim by non-implementation of the new scale and assessment. It was proudly announced that if there was a sudden and high rise in prices during these five years for which implementation of the new settlement was being deferred:

> government will forego the full benefit to which they would otherwise be entitled, so that an abrupt and large increase in the government demand will not immediately follow the period of acute depression.[116]

Report after report, this heavily loaded proclamation of charity was splashed across the pages.

Whereas, the loss being bemoaned was actually only a hypothetical loss - from an expected rise in prices. What is more, behind this hypothetical loss lay hidden the harsh reality that given the prevailing price situation, had the new scale been implemented the government would be entitled to collect far below what it had actually collected. The same reports admitted that:

> As long as prices remain at the present level the new system will involve government in a substantial loss on the revenue which government is entitled to collect in the current settlement; the loss will of course vary with the level of prices...[117]

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116. Ibid.

117. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.38.

In fact, while government was bemoaning these hypothetical losses, it was actually taking more from the cultivator than would have been its due under the new settlement on the basis of the sliding scale. Thus the Samundri report categorically stated:

> Had the new settlement been in force during these five years (1931-32 to 1935-36), the revenue payers would have had to pay Rs.18,91,298 in all less than they were called upon to pay, representing an average of about Rs.3,78,260 less per annum. The net demand recoverable would have been Rs.48,08,398 as against the assessable demand under the existing assessment of Rs.77,59,097 representing a decrease of approximately 38 per cent.[118]

The report went on to say that since the current index figure worked out to only 53.4 per cent of the standard index figure which meant that had the new settlement been in force, cultivators would have had to pay 21.2 per cent less than what they had actually paid.

The Lyallpur tahsil report provides a similar example. In 1934-35 alone cultivators would have been entitled to 55 per cent remissions on the new demand, viz., they would have "gained by nearly 4,00,000 in this one year alone had the new settlement been in force."[119] In Toba Tek Singh tahsil the new scale would have

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118. Ibid.

119. A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

involved a remission of 45.7 per cent in the same year and "revenue payers would have had to pay Rs. 17,31,670 in all less than they were called upon to pay."[120]

In other words, postponement of the new settlement was based on the realisation that, given low prices, demand would have to be scaled down. Meanwhile, government felt cheated - because its expectations had been aroused by the preceding high prices; i.e., the 'loss' was actually no more than denial of an expected gain.

At the other end was the cultivator who felt crushed under the burden and, therefore, recoiled at the very thought of reassessment. Justifiably so since government's efforts to allay his fears that a revised scale would be lenient were meaningless in the face of his actual experience. More so when government's benign postures went hand in hand with tongue in cheek statements: which pointed out "how extremely generous the new system is and should remove any doubts as to the benefit which it will confer on the zamindars";[121] and sought to back it up by the claim that in the last five years, "no serious difficulty was experienced by government in collecting a demand 16½ lakhs in (one tahsil) excess of

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120. A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.29.

121. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.28.

what would have been permissible had the sliding scale system been in force."[122]

While not overemphasising the point made above we will only add that of late efforts have been made to examine the more subtle features of colonial rule. We have no disagreement with those working in this direction. We only wish to reiterate that these subtleties were not necessarily at cross purposes with more blatant forms of exploitation. The experience of Punjab in the depression years particularly highlights this aspect of the Raj. The rapid increase of demand in the previous years hit all sections of the rural population in the difficult years, but was particularly disastrous for the smaller peasants.

Not surprisingly, government encountered resistance to the pitch of demand and the oasis of assessment. Consequently in the 1920s, there was talk of devising a mechanism to entertain complaints regarding land revenue. A suggestion to publicise the proposals for re-settlement of land revenue so as to afford the persons affected an opportunity to raise objections before final orders were passed was considered. This met with resistance from several officers of the Revenue Department, Punjab, who argued that such a step assumed that "the settlement

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122. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.38.

officer's proposals on which orders are passed are made without a full opportunity to all concerned of urging their views up on him", and raised questions regarding the role of the revenues bureaucracy in a colonial state.[123] The settlement officer, it was pointed out, "stands as an arbiter between the revenue payers and the Government, and his proposals must contain his considered replies to possible objections by the people that he is taking too much or by the government that he is taking too little..."[124]

In the face of the imperial government's insistence that such a procedure be tried out, the Lieutenant-Governor and the Revenue Secretary, Punjab, conveyed their belief that such a step "would not really modify the situation in any manner other than increasing the small number of objections at present usually attending a Punjab settlement".[125] Ultimately Government of India's wish prevailed, and Punjab officials accepted it with the cryptic comment that this step would,

> remove the objections of those who from one motive or other, are disposed to criticise the actions of government and are glad to have an opportunity of posing as the champions of the agriculturists and, as Punjab experience in 1907 and 1913 showed, endeavour to arouse in them a sense of grievance which might embarrass government.[126]

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123. Rev.Agri.Rev., Jan.1920,A.Pro.32,F.252,of1917,p.57.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.

Section IV - Water Management and the Canal Bureaucracy

We now turn to the system of canal water management. Government laid stress on close and continuous control by expert irrigation officers on distribution of the supply in all large irrigated works. These officers were expected to keep a strict account of every cubic foot of water entering their canals; the idea being that this strict vigil would prevent unequal or ineffective distribution of the supply and localize wasteful expenditures. Further, it would ensure to the government strict accounting of every pie that was 'due' to it in return for this stupendous achievement.

In this context it is interesting that while the Irrigation Commission and every report, official or semi-official, emphasised the need for strict accounting of every drop of water that trickled on to the field, no detailed roster of record of rights in irrigation at the time of annexation was made in the course of the early settlements. The settlement report for Multan district, 1901, described at length the inundation canals made by proprietors themselves in pre-annexation days; and the watercourses to private lands constructed by individuals with the permission of the ruler. The individual who constructed these water courses was as much their owner as the constructor of a well was its owner, and could

dispose of the water as he pleased, could put up dams and jhālars and even sell the whole or a part of the right to irrigation from the watercourse. These rights were, however, subject to orders from the ruler or other local powerful men who drew favour from the ruler. No doubt, given the state of affairs, incessant conflict prevailed regarding the distribution of water. While the officers drew up detailed statements of water-courses in existence and so on, they studiously refrained from making any record of irrigation rights. The extra Assistant Commissioner Multan district in 1860 himself party to such an exercise, outlined 3 major factors for this (a) that it may stir up unnecessary disputes (b) to avoid stereotyping transitory disputes and (c) to avoid placing on record anything which may curb the power of distributing water that was vested in the canal officer with the passing of the Canal Act in 1873.[127]

In the years to come official opinion made clear its disapproval of private initiative in canal-building. In a note submitted to the Irrigation Commission, Wilson wrote that he was "not in favour of encouraging private persons to construct further canals"; he found that their management was "rarely" satisfactory and that it was in

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127. S.R. Multan, 1901, p.41.

the interest of landowners that "government should make the canals and have complete control over them", construction of private canals should be allowed only when government was not prepared to build it and there too, "government should have full power to step in and assume the management whenever it thought proper".[128] Another question which soon came up was that of compensation to owners of private canals. The compensation due was actually on two counts. Firstly, on account of diminution of supply in the canals and secondly, on account of loss of income from land, i.e., in their capacity as canal owners as well as land owners.

Discussion on the nature and amount of compensation began soon after Colonisation was extended to regions covered by private canals, mainly revolving around the provisions of the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act. The matter remained a ticklish one, with government initially wanting to acquire the canals and canal-owners resisting it. When it was decided that private ownership would stay the compensation could not be decided on. Matters were complicated by the fact of claims, if any of those who did not own the canals, but had some rights to their water, with or without payment.[129] While differences continued on all these aspects, it was decided that

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128. IIC, App., p.42.

129. Rev.Agri.Rev., December 1909, A.Pro.62-67, F.70.

one form of compensation would be lease of land on proprietary terms in the Colony tracts. The debate continued and it was finally decided that claims for compensation would be settled as and when they came up.[130]

As pointed out in Chapter I above, official policy was to discourage construction of private canals once its own network of perennial canals began to spread. This was justified by drawing attention to the 'utter mismanagement' prevailing on private canals,[131] but there can be no doubt that the primary reason for this was government's wish to exercise greater control over water resources. The Punjab government was being pushed into recognising "the necessity of increasing the influence of the district officer in this matter".[132] The Collector, it was specified, should "have a weighty voice in a matter of such vital importance to the raiyat as the supply and distribution of irrigation water".[133]

With respect to the state owned canals, to begin with, only the main canal was maintained by government and there was nothing in the shape of rajbahās to bring water to the door of the irrigation. The landlords had to make their own arrangement to bring water from the canal,

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130. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1909, A.Pro.4-5.

131. IIC., Appendix, Evidence, Punjab, p.21.

132. Rev.Agri.Rev., June 1910, A.Pro.50-51.

133. Ibid.

however far it may be from his holding; the rich ones, consequently made their own watercourses, while the others combined with thier neighbours, or even perhaps with the rest of the village, to build a joint water-course. As a result, often, there were a number of these watercourses - running parallel and independent - for long distances from the canals. Each of these had to be cleaned out annually and as the spoil banks became higher cost of clearing increased. It was only on later branches that the Irrigation Department constructed watercourses leading to each square.

The limit of the area supplied with water from the canal was defined by an artifical line, known as the irrigation boundary, usually a natural drainage beyond which it was inexpedient or impossible for canal water to pass by gravitation but not co-terminous with village boundaries. The irrigation boundary performed the important function of prescribing the limits to which the canal Department was confined as an assessing agency, beyond which the district revenue staff were responsible for the assessment. Similarly, branches, distributaries, village water courses also had irrigation boundaries.[134]

In order to cope with the organisational aspect of maintaining canals, Colony tracts were divided into

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134. CSR, op.cit., p.23.

canal divisions, approximately 60 miles long and 20 miles broad, comprising 500 miles of government channels and utilizing a designed discharge of 1,500 cusecs to be distributed through 1,500 outlets.[135]

The major factors influencing water allotments were as follows: (a) discharge factor for the channel, (b) condition of channel (c) allotted area on the outlet (d) hagg percentage (e) permissible percentage (f) command of water (g) nature of soil whether level, uneven, broken etc. (h) nature of soil - whether sandy, containing salts etc. (j) per cent of irrigation actually done.[136]

Distribution was through outlets fixed in the distributaries and each outlet served no more than one village, though there could be more than one outlet on a distributary. The area irrigated by an outlet was referred to as a chak which generally comprised of thirty squares but never more than forty. The discharge on a watercourse was generally one to three cubic feet per second. However, it was found that to irrigate every square simultaneously would be wasteful and ineffective. A more effective method was found in the 'wāribandi' or practise of turning the supply on to each square by turns commencing from the squares at the head of the watercourse.

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135. Spate, op.cit., p.470

136. Ibid.

If for some reason the wāri was interrupted, it recommended from where the stoppage had occurred. On the Chenab Canal the duration of the wāri was fixed in proportion to the area of land held; each wāri was from 2 to 4 pehars each or 6 to 12 hours, once in 10 days. In case of dispute the zilladār or the Executive Engineer made out a wāribandi in consultation with the people, which was signed by the settlers and water distributed accordingly. This too did not always work smoothly as is obvious from the Superintending Engineer's statement that in exceptional cases, for instance, if the time for sowing was nearly over and a man had not been able to sow his full area, or the Executive Engineer took a decision to this effect.[137] Apart from the peasants one square's turn was allowed for tanks and trees, and half a square's turn for plantation owners in each village.

On the Lower Jhelum Canal the cultivators arranged the periods for which water was due according to the mares they had to maintain; also, in some cases, according to the squares they possessed. The period was ideally proportionable to the total number of mares or squares covered by an outlet. Thus if there were thirty mares in a chak and one man possessed two, his turn would be for 2/30 of 10 days, that is two-thirds of one day if ten

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137. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Answers, p.33.

days were taken as the unit, or 14/30 of a day if a week was taken as a unit. In proprietory villages it was customary to fix the wāris on the total number of acres each cultivator possessed.[138]

In order to prevent waste by water flowing off, the zamindars had to resort to kiārābandi - or partition in the field. Infringement of this rule was punishable under the Canal Act of 1873.

In Kala Gaddi Thamman, Lyallpur, the Colonists receiving water from the two large outlets co-operated - they had arranged for watch and bell which was kept with the Gurdwara priest who announced with a ring when one turn was over and the other began. No case was noticed of a cultivator selling his water turn to another : It was felt that such an act was entirely against the general sentiments of the people, though exchanges of whole or part of wāris were not uncommon. There were instances of a cultivator taking more than his share, which frequently was the cause of a dispute. Disputes were generally resolved by a committee of 4 or 5 cultivators who intervened in order to see that justice was done. The village survey noted that if the defaulter refused to give back the extra water,

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138. Ibid., Reply by C.H.A. Muller, Ex. Engineer Lower Jhelum Canal, p.85.

other members also took extra water as in one case in this village when the wāri per square rose from 4 to 9 pehers - till the zillādār brought about a settlement.[139]

Early in the history of irrigation in the Punjab the designers proposed to irrigate during the year every acre commanded, i.e. a 100% intensity of irrigation of cultivated land. However, as the earliest canals came to be plagued with waterlogging, general opinion favoured a supply sufficient to irrigate one-third of the area. Subsequently, the Lower Jhelum Canal was designed with a proposed intensity of 50%. It was hoped that even if the cultivators spread this allowance as much as they could manage to, waterlogging could be avoided. The matter however, could not be solved so easily. This was one of the questions that figured prominently in the discussions, questions and evidence related to the Canal Colonies' Committee, 1907. The Committee set about collecting responses to the official contention - whether a 'permissible area' of 75% of which 45% was for rabi was sufficient to secure prosperity amongst the cultivators of a tract in which rain crops were of negligible extent and the holdings, in some cases, as small as half a square.[140] The answer from almost all the Superintending and Executive Engineers

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139. BEIP., PVS 4, op.cit., p.49.

140. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, A, Pro 1-4, Special Questions, p.16.

on the various canals, was that 75 per cent permissible area was sufficient. Referring to a petition made by one Dalip Singh and 86 other peasants, the Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle, argued that what was 'insufficient' in the eyes of the peasants was insufficient only in terms of the peasants' desire for 'excessive irrigation'. If excessive irrigation were to continue, subsoil water would rise rapidly leading to soil deterioration.[141] The Executive Engineer, Jhang Division, Lower Chenab Canal, was of the opinion that the reduction of permissible area though necessary, would be difficult, since the grantees and tenants had become accustomed to that much water and to a mode of life based on that assumption.[142]

The Multan settlement report made a special note of the changes that were coming about which, "entail a great deal of interference by government that was unknown before, both in canal and in revenue matters..." and advised caution, "while the people are still unaccustomed to and, prejudiced against, the change of system."[143]

Official reaction was similarly strong in response to a further question that the Committee put as to whether

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141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. S.R.Multan, 1901, op.cit., p.35.

the haqq area originally fixed should be maintained? It may be explained that haqq referred to the area peasants had a right to irrigate while 'permissible area' was the maximum they were permitted to irrigate. On the Lower Chenab Canal, while permissible area as stated earlier, was 75 per cent, haqq had been fixed at 66 per cent.[144] The Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle, however, objected to the use of both the terms: "Permissible implies and originally meant that it is the maximum permissible limit whereas it is now intended by government to work up and down to this standard", he said while haqq was objectionable since, "government was not legally bound to supply water for any definite area."[145] He wanted the term haqq to be dropped and the words "area intended to be irrigated annually", to be substituted for permissible area; there were others who thought that haqq ought to be used while 'permissible area' should be dropped since it tended to create problems through raised expectations.[146]

Another proposal sought to link water supply with the depth of subsoil water, and demarcation of zones on this basis: thus for zone A with a spring level of 40 feet or

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144. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.1-4, Special Questions, No.3.

145. Ibid., p.17.

146. Ibid., p.16.

above, the annual irrigation permissible be 50 per cent; for zone B with a depth to spring level of 25 to 40 per cent, and for zone C, with a spring level depth of less than 25 feet, the irrigation permissible be fixed at 25 per cent.[147] This proposal, implemented on the Lower Jhelum Canal, exempted bār lands, which not being prone to a high spring level, were allowed 75 per cent. Surprisingly, the Superintending Engineer added that government, "could give no definite promise as to per cent of irrigation while reserving for itself the right to reduce canal water supply in case of a rise in spring level."[148] It was hoped that by fixing a low intensity percentage for zones B and C a check would be kept on the abandonment of wells, the steady working of which would, in turn, keep down the spring level in these low lying tracts. As the waterlogging menace increased in the Hafizabad tract, there too the intensity was reduced from 75 per cent to 50 per cent.[149]

✓ The Executive Engineer on the Lower Chenab Canal, pointed out that while the proposal was theoretically fine, it would be found "highly unpopular and difficult to arrange. Even now the department is unpopular because we try to reduce irrigation to the 75 per cent permissible

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147. Ibid. Special Question regarding colony condition on LJC, p.60.

148. Ibid.

149. Thompson, 1925, p.22.

limit, what would it be if we were to try and reduce the percentage of some of the villages now doing 110 per cent and more to about 60 per cent or so as would be necessary under the zone system."[150] He was of the opinion that Colonists would not take to well irrigation, with its heavy work, and the "result will be discontent..."[151]

The problem was more than merely one of nomenclature or percentages of intensity. The real cause of the dispute was the reduction of supplies to the early Colonists as canal irrigation and Colonization progressed, The Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works, Punjab, explained to the Colonies' Committee that extensions on the Chenab Canal were being undertaken since there was sufficient waste land lying uncultivated which could be irrigated and distributed among potential Colonists. While asserting, on the one hand, that the river supply was sufficient to irrigate these lands in addition to the permissible areas already under irrigation, on the other he conceded that the only result affecting settlers would be "reduced supply to those obtaining more than necessary for their permissible areas."[152] He asserted that the canals carried a "larger supply than is necessary for the areas to be irrigated. The extra supply is allowed to be used by peasant settlers,

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150. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Answers File, p.15.

151. Ibid.

152. Ibid., Reply to Question 4, p.18.

pending it being required on extensions so as to benefit both them and the public revenues, rather than allow it to be wasted by being sent down the river and not taken into the canal."[153]

Meanwhile government stepped up a crusade against 'waste' of water. The reports are replete with descriptions of how water delivered from the canals was allowed to go waste; of heavy irrigations being applied to fallow fields with no provisions for subsequent cultivation. It was also 'discovered' that most crops were receiving at certain times of the year, much more water than was actually needed. The greatest waste as per official statements, occurred in the months June to September, when there was plenty of water in the rivers and canals ran full supply as well. Fodder crops, officials pointed out, seemed to be the recipient of most of the excessive supply since these could withstand excessive irrigation with less damage. Government, consequently, was at pains to evolve methods by which economy in irrigation may be enforced.[154]

The picture presented is that of an irrational peasant who was loth to refuse water even when he was getting surplus. Yet if one approaches this very evidence from the viewpoint of the cultivator, a different picture emerges. Thus, between 1892 and 1905, when the first

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153. Ibid.

154. Ibid. Answers File, Passim.

major disturbances took place in the Colonies - the agriculturists had witnessed the proverbial stretching of the cloth: As land under cultivation increased, the water available, in the rivers and the canals, was reduced; further the prevailing conflict and confusion regarding 'permissiole' and 'haqq' area raised many a doubt in the peasant's mind; to add to the uncertainty, the Irrigation Branch initiated a process of remodelling or altering outlets on the one hand, while going ahead with charges for waste and improper use of water; to top it all, while complaints regarding distribution of water accumulated, government proceeded to announce enhancement of water charges. This was really the last straw, as far as the Colonists were concerned. We are not at this point going into the reasons of, and nature of the 1905, disturbances. What is being pointed out here, however, is that in the face of the stance government took vis-a-vis the distribution of water the peasant was not irrational. If at all he was, his 'irrationality' was in response to the irrational or 'arbitary' posture that government was adopting.

Questioned about the reasons for which remodelling or alteration of outlets was undertaken and whether this would result in certainty of supply, the Superintending Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal Circle confirmed that "there can be no finality about the size of outlets on this or

the circumstances? The matter has been reported and referred by the local government often enough, but no real reformation has been attempted."[173] The problem lay not just at the government end. The discussion around the question of waste of water and charges for the same amply brought out that among the agriculturists themselves, some were taking advantage, at the cost of the others. The Superintending Engineer, Lower Jhelum Colony stated that "it is undoubtedly the case that petty canal officials receive pecuniary consideration for failure to bring cases of waste of water to notice."[174] Opposing the proposal for bulk sales of water, the Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works, Punjab expressed the opinion that "great difficulty is likely to arise in the distribution of water by the different cultivators among themselves and in the collection of propertionate payments from them, unless both distribution and assessment were done by an outside superior authority; and government alone would be such; the strong would certainly take advantage of the weak and much injustice and suffering would result."[175] The Executive Engineer, Lower Chenab Canal, thought that while this "might be effective in a yeoman or capitalist village where the management of a number of squares rests with one man who looks after his tenants and serves the supply just where

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173. I.I.C., Appendix, op.cit., p.50.

174. Rev.Agri. Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Special Questions, p.107.

175. Ibid., Question No.10, p.35

he sees a necessity; it would be quite different in peasant villages where each individual has to get a turn and where each one is selfish enough not to be prepared to give up a part even of his turn to benefit his brother. The strain of this is apparent in the winter months with the rabi crops where through short supplies in the river these canals have to run their branches in turns. One cultivator may be lucky enough to get his supply in a turn in which he can sow wheat and the canal may just be closed when another's turn come on. This cultivator may be deprived entirely of a crop if the internal management is left in the hands of the individuals - of a village.[176] The Executive Engineer for Jhang Division of the Lower Chenab Canal was certain that considering even when the cultivators pay for the actual matured irrigation there was trouble in seeing that each of the shareholders gets his share in proper turns; "if the water were to be sold by bulk, we will require a staff, almost as big as the present one, to see that the rich lambardār does not rob the poor of his share or what sometimes does much more damage, give his share at a time when he does not want it."[177]

The extent to which canal water made a difference was reflected in some of the proverbs in this region:[178]

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176. Ibid. p.38.
177. Ibid.
178. BEIP, PVS, II, p.82

any other canal", for the discharge varied with the head of water pressure, silt movement and so on.[155]

The complaints received by the canal administration fell in two categories: those made by cultivators at the head and those made by cultivators at the tail of the channels. While "those at the tail complain that we do not give them enough water, those at the head complain that we so frequently alter their outlets that they do not know where they are".[156]

Whereas, government had already by the first decade of the twentieth century begun talk of restricting supplies, the first round of settlement operations in these areas brought to light the fact that canal water supply to many of the Colony tracts was yet to stabilize. The assessment Report for Jhang and Gugera Branch Circles, Jhang district, observed that while irrigation in the tract had generally improved, the villages in the Chiniot tahsil at the tail of the Wagwala, Kot Ahmadyar Branch, and Kot Wasana Minor still do not achieve their 'minimum permissible area' in all cases; while these were said to be improving, "the supply at the tail of the nazrānā distributory in mauzā 98 and 99, Jhang Branch, sometimes breaks down". To this

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155. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Answer File, p.22.

156. Ibid. Evidence File, p.581.

was added the great lurking fear in the back of the zamindars' mind that "when the Triple Canal Colonization Scheme opens, his water-supply will be reduced."[157]

Almost all assessment reports of the region refer to complaints of this kind. Going by the issues that came up before the Colonies' Committee, the major problems were on account of (a) high land (b) tail villages (c) changes in outlets (d) inadequate and improper drainage and (e) corruption. All these plagued the different canals in varying degrees.[158] Government, while admitting these problems, adopted measures which either ignored or worsened the conditions. Thus it was not uncommon to restrict supplies at the Head Works, especially during the monsoon; at times carrier canals were closed during the kharif seasons; closure of distributaries was also resorted to, particularly in water-logged tracts; sometimes a reorganisation of the village water-courses was undertaken by which shorter 'wāris' were arranged; the building of ridges or bunds was at times enforced - involving extra labour which proved to be a very laborious process for moderate cultivators.

There was no dearth of proposals from government quarters. Thus at one point settlement officers were

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157. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit., para 20.

158. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, A.Pro.Evidence File, pp.42-46.

asked to explore whether any persons on one outlet, more especially yeomen and capitalists, would take a fixed demand for land revenue and occupier's rate (ābiānā), based on the average of the past for a short period.[159] The Settlement Officer for Jhang and Gugera Branches reported back that he had in fact received some applications to this effect, adding that in each case, the applicant had expressed a willingness to take up such a contract, provided government assured them that their outlet would not be reduced during the period of the contract. The reply received from the Executive Engineer, Lyallpur division, maintained that the Canal Department, "reserves to itself the right to reduce outlets when it chooses". Not only were all the applications withdrawn but the settlement officer himself expressed the view that, "failing such a promise I much doubt that anyone would be willing to adopt such a contract."[160] Approximately 110 persons gave evidence before the Colonies' Committee regarding the water distribution problem, with the majority of government officials arguing the official view point. The zamindars represented their case before the committee pointing out that their complaints to zillādārs regarding distribution of water went unheeded while complaints to higher authorities set the zillādārs

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159. Ibid.

160. Ibid., Evidence of Sayad Kalam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Multan, p.57.

against them - resulting in their getting even less water.[161] In some cases complaints drawing attention to the bad state of crops in certain villages met with the stock reply that, as per statistics, the haqq area had been matured while the Colonists absolutely denied this. In any case the validity of statistics did not improve the state of the crop.

Cultivators also came forward with complaints of extortion in the canal department. Shahabu, a lambardār of mauzā 104, Jhang Branch, narrated how people were sent from one officer to another for matters such as changes in outlets etc. and how they had to pay everywhere: "the treasury officials loot us; all officials loot us", he emphatically stated.[162] Father Cageton, of mauzā 51, Gugera Branch, whose estate lay on the tail of the Khunnan Minor complained that when he complained of withered crops not only did he not get a sympathetic hearing - he was instead told that the fault lay with his cultivators while the fact was that the trouble was due to the "unsatisfactory way in which the Khunnan Minor, and in particular, the water courses of his village worked.[163] While Father Cageton drew attention to the heavy debts his tenants had incurred due to these and other problems the officials wryly commented that

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161. Ibid., Passim.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid., Evidence File, p.39.

his tenants were "sweepers by caste and were no doubt prone to extravagance."[164]

Risaldar Major Chiragh Khan, a capitalist grantee of twenty five squares in Lyallpur referred to overseers and mistris who had great power of making extortions in connection with the fixing of outlets:

> "If a zamindar has succeeded after great trouble in getting an outlet of a certain size sanctioned by the superior canal authorities, the local mistri can still cause him great loss by the way in which he erects the moga, fixing it either too high or crooked so that it will not discharge properly..."[165]

While numerous such complaints were forthcoming wherever the Committee gathered evidence, resistance to the Committee itself was mounted by none less than the Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department. Mr. J.J. Mullaly in a note to the Committee, charged that, "the agitation against the Canal Department was the result not only of question put by the comittee but also of the known bias against the Canal Administration, but of the district officers in charge of the canal tracts."[166] Arguing that the complaints were "so few and so contradictory," he asserted that "we should have heard nothing of these complaints against the Canal Administration, just as we should have heard nothing of the demand for proprietory

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164. Ibid.

165. Ibid., p.362

166. Ibid., Answers File, Note dated 3.8.1908

rights, had not the people been given to understand that such complaints were quite expected."[167]

It is clear that the entire process of reaching water to the fields and enforcing the will and wish of government policy was not only arduous, but also that its successful prosecution "depended to a large extent on the maintenance of the personnel of the Public Works Department at an adequate strength."[168] There emerged a canal 'bureaucracy', within the local Public Works Department, functioning under the Chief Engineer and Secretary to government, Irrigation, officers employed exclusively for the purpose of construction, management and development of the canals.

The Irrigation Commission believed that on the one hand "the effect of imposing on the Irrigation Officer the duty of supervising the assessments and the internal distribution of the water-supply has been to bring him into a closer and kindlier touch with the cultivators, and to give him a more detailed knowledge of their wants than would have been possible in Northern India under any other system of management.[169] Sitting members of the Commision, however, also bemoaned the fact that whereas "many years ago it was the most popular branch of the Public Works Department in North India, and consequently commanded the services of the most competent engineers, now this is all changed.

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167. Ibid.
168. I.I.C., General Report, p.99
169. Ibid., p.101.

Engineers are reluctant to enter the canal service, and anxious to leave it."[170] At the lower level on the contrary, the introduction of canal irrigation led to a keen competition for appointment to the post of lambardārs, and in many cases sanction was sought for an increase in lambardāri.[171]

That the situation was not free from hazards for the peasants, the 'beneficiaries' of canal irrigation is clear from the endless number of complaints against canal officers referred to earlier. The corruption prevalent amongst the canal patwāris, and lambardārs; both, in distribution of water and timing of water and more so in an indiscriminate imposition of fines, legal and illegal, was made amply clear by hundreds of withesses who appeared before the Colonies' Committee.[172] (See Tables 3.7 and 3.8).

The Irrigation Commission itself sounded the warning note while arguing for maintenance of high standards amongst officers. Taking exception to the heterogenous mass of imperial engineers, provincial engineers, temporary engineers picked up anyhow - it concluded : "the confusion is terrible. How can a proper standard be gained under

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170. Ibid., p. 102.

171. S.R., Jhang, 906, p.47.

172. Rev. Agri. Rev., April 1909, Pro 1-4, Evidence File, op.cit., passim,

TABLE 3 .7

FINES IMPOSED ON COLONISTS 1898 TO 1907

	Imposed	Collected
Fines warranted by condition	32,399	27,094
Fines imposed in lieu of confiscation	1,59,722	41,266
Fines not warranted by conditions	1,16,239	51,370
Fines for illicit cultivation (unclassified)	36,052	21,380
Total	3,44,453	1,41,110

Source : Canal Colonies Committee Report, 1909, p. 765.

TABLE 3 .8

FINES IMPOSED ON COLONISTS 1900-1907

Year	Imposed Rs.	Collected Rs.
1900	5,945	3,522
1901	21,399	11,392
1902	23,635	3,266
1903	1,15,426	11,374
1904	66,292	29,091
1905	55,734	38,109
1906	44,958	38,637
1907	10,087	4,743

Source : Canal Colonies Committee Report, 1909, p. 766.

"Mūdh dā faqir, te pand dā amir"
(A beggar near the head of the canal is as good as a rich man at its tail)

The fact that money exercised its own power was also well-known :

"Pand dā pich, nā pit nā pārit, zar zardijit".
(Irrigation at the tail of a canal cannot be got for love : he wins who spends money and supplicates)[179]

The village survey for Multan, specifically mentioned that "the poorer cultivators seldom sought justice from the Canal Department, regarding wāriḃandi laws under Section 68 of the Canal and Drainage Act of North India of 1873. It noted that even if a cultivator was driven by desperation to petition "when the case is referred to a Court, he will withdraw it the next morning either from fear or through the persuasion of the big landlords."[180]

The Executive Engineer, Burala Division, Chenab Colony sought to brush away the problem by blaming it on the 'primitiveness' of the Jangli: "in ordinary villages there is no such trouble though I have frequently heard of quarrels about petty matters in Jangli Villages such as are never heard of from others."[181]

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179. Ibid., p.86.

180. Ibid., p.83.

181. Ibid., Evidence File, p.390.

The Superintending Engineer on the Lower Chenab Canal Circle sought to clarify the government's position on the question of size of outlets in this context :

> "Just as a zamindar is entitled to ask that an outlet shall be enlarged if at any time it is found to be too small, so also the canal officer must have power to reduce an outlet at any time, if he finds it is too large; any other arrangement would be one-sided and impossible. The head through the present outlets can be increased by the people themselves by clearing their watercourses thus lowering the level of the water surface."[182]

In consequence of this many outlets draw off more water than was intended and "inspite of the fact that outlets have been reduced water does not reach the tails of certain distributaries when authorised supply enters the head."[183] He believed that the size of the outlets must be reduced for those villages which were found to get more than their share of water in order to benefit other villages which were badly off. By the mid 1930s when a fresh round of settlement operations was undertaken, extensive remodelling of outlets had been undertaken in the large part of the Lower Chenab Colony atleast. While describing the remodelling of outlets operations, the tendency on the part of officials was to highlight that a substantial measure of equality had been achieved in the distribution of water. This was partly attributable to the Adjustable Proportionate Module which made control and check on water discharge easier and more

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182. Ibid., Question 6, p.22

183. Ibid.

efficient. In Lyallpur, it was claimed that "the marvel is that there is not a tail chak but is now receiving its permissible supply or more. Indeed the general feeling of content regarding adequacy of supplies is so apparent that the irresistible conclusion is that even-handed justice has been done all round."[184] In the last twenty-five years, government claimed, the full supply factor at the outlet head had been steadily raised from 200 to 264 acres per cusec in 1925, and that with a water allowance designed to mature only 75% of the allotted area the zamindar in fact matures 40% and even 50% greater acreage: "matured area statistics should give quietus to carping critics who are never tired of clamouring that canal supplies have been so vigorously reduced as to endanger the well-being and prosperity of the Colony population."[185]

In Samundri tahsil, after remodelling "the result was so satisfactory that there is no chak of the tahsil now where the state of irrigation warrants field to field Kharaba inspection--remarkable since long distributaries bristling with minors intensify the troublesome task of securing adequate supplies for tail chaks."[186] That some problem persisted with the tail chaks is brought out by the following statement in the same report: "in abnormal years of deficient supply in the river, occasionally resort has

184. A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.6.

185. Ibid.

186. A.R., Samundri, op.cit., p.7.

to be made to the unsatisfactory expedient of rotational closures to convey adequate supplies to these chaks."[187] The fact that the results were not evenly spread out was supported by the fact that while on the Tandlianwala distributary the average area matured as per cent of allotted was 115 on the Killianwala and Khatuana distributaries it was as low as 85% or 87%."[188]

In Toba Tek Singh, despite remodelling, "difficulties persisted in a number of chaks at the extremities, particularly at the tail of Jhang Branch."[189] In atleast three chaks the full supply factor was reduced from 264 acres to one cusec of water to 175 acres to the cusec "to compensate for inferior soil and difficulty of distribution."[190] Further, in these, the water allowance per acre was increased from the normal 2.84 cusec to 4.29 cusecs per 1,000 acres. While the average figures for matured area between the years 1923-33 approximated over 102, falling below that only during the depression years, coming down once to 80 but also going up to 107, on the tail chaks the percentage of area matured ranged between 61, at its lowest, and 87 at the highest.[191]

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187. Ibid.
188. Ibid.
189. A.R., Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., pp.5-6.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid.

The Settlement Officer testified that in some of the chaks in the Toba Tek Singh tahsil :

> "Poor supply appears to be chronic. 264-GB is particularly unfortunate. For a single chak of 59 squares there is only one outlet. In the hot weather irrigation turns come so late that the crops raised cannot attain any degree of excellence. Add to this the fact that the soil is poor. The proprietors are Gaddi Biloches - not the best of agriculturists. It is small wonder that the proprietory body is depressed. The Tarkhani tail chaks 185, 186, 187 and 188 are no better. The Superintending Engineer, East Circle, has been particularly sympathetic to the chaks on the tail of Mungi and Tarkhani distributaries and has been endeavouring to improve their irrigation; but I doubt if there can be any tangible permanent result."[192]

Considering this to be the "least fortunate circle in the district in the matter of irrigation," the officer concluded that the poorer chaks "should not be assessed to full ābiānā rates..."[193] The Report for Gugera Branch Circle, Lower Chenab Canal referred to three Jangli villages, numbers 537, 538 and 539 "which have been approached from all directions, but which defy all efforts made to irrigate them adequately."[194] In some years the villages had to be altogether deserted. Thus in 1907-1908 when the rains failed, crops on only two acres out of twelve-and-a-half acre holdings were matured.[195]

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192. Ibid.

193. Ibid.

194. A.R., Gugera Branch Circle, Lower Chenab Canal, p.3.

195. Ibid., p.22.

In some villages, as in the case of Gajju Chak, in Gujranwala district, canal water was not utilized to the extent that it might be. This was attributed primarily to the fact that canal water was available only in the kharif harvest, except for a preliminary watering for rabi crops before sowing, after which the canal closed down. In order to mature rabi crops cultivators had to work the wells - which increased expenses on cattle and labour. In such instances, cultivators found their expenses going up disproportionately due to payment of water-rates. Increase in water-rates in 1924 strengthened the cultivators' disinclination to use canal water, and to depend more on wells; use of canal water, however, went up if the rains failed - as happened in the case of 1921 and 1922 kharif harvest.[196]

In general, however, in this village the cultivators tried to work the wells and avoid canal water rates. There was, at the same time, no holding which was purely barani, chāhi or nahri holding - for all cultivation was mixed.[197]

To conclude this section we may briefly say that while government was adopting a double-edged strategy - of both cutting down supply as well as charging more for

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196. BEIP, PVS, 6, p.60.

197. Ibid., p.63.

it the cultivator was at the receiving end. The supply remained erratic, both in timing and quantum; distribution remained uneven while those who were more well-placed took advantage of their economic status and location of their lands to ensure a full supply and perhaps more; the corruption rampant amongst the canal bureaucracy created further bitterness, especially among those could not pay.

What were the options before those deprived of an adequate supply? The incessant demand for remissions on account of failure of crops was one option commonly resorted to; agitation was another - as happened in the case of the 1905 disturbances; a third option, which did not attract this kind of attention was, however, equally important and long lasting - viz., the shift in cropping patterns which was to a large extent related to the question of quantity, timing and charges for supply. While we now turn to the question of remissions, the pattern of land use will be discussed in the next chapter.

Section V: Crop Failure and Revenue Remission

The incidence of kharābā or failed crops on total area sown was directly linked to revenue and irrigation policy. Having had its origins in a high proportion of crop failure and famine conditions prevailing in Punjab through out a large part of the nineteenth century, the

issue of kharābā also got linked up with the debate on the question of fixed and fluctuating land revenue demand. Since 1882, when a broad classification of secure, insecure and fluctuating tracts was drawn up, revenue instructions had talked of 'elasticity' and 'moderation'. The 1902 instructions tried to interpret 'elasticity' in the specific context of (a) widespread calamities such as famine, drought and general failure of crops and (b) local or isolated calamities such as hail, floods and locusts.[198] In the course of discussion on these issues, government made a clear distinction between 'elasticity' of assessment' and 'elasticity of collection'. Having expressed itself in favour of fixed assessment, government logically followed it up with its disapproval of kharābā, emphasising that in principle the revenue-payer "has not by rule or contract any right to an acatement of the fixed demand assessed upon his lands at assessment".[199] This was justified on the grounds that demand was so pitched as to allow for, "ordinary variations of season during the period of settlement, and the demand ought in theory to be paid in bad years as well as in good."[200] However, since government could not escape noticing "the evil effects of

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198. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1902, A.Pro.32, F.161.

199. Ibid., Pro.33.

200. Ibid.

rigidity of collection in adverse seasons," it also accepted the need for remissions.[201] While accepting the need for remissions, the point was carefully driven home that these were "a measure purely of grace and not of right", lest these come to be looked upon as a regular feature of the administration.[202]

The same understanding prevailed with respect to kharābā in the Colonies. Since in the Colonies Kharābā was linked to non-availability of water, it was blamed on the cultivators' desire to spread irrigation over more than the 'permissible area. In view of this: "tendency of the settlers to attempt the cultivation of a much larger proportion of their holdings than it has even been intended to irrigate annually..." government expected him to pay for his gamble.[203] Whereas it was proposed to bind the peasants to bring under cultivation one-third of the area of their holdings within three years from allotment and half within five, they had practically broken up nearly two-thirds within the first three years. From one point of view this was most satisfactory but the tenants were aiming at "quantity rather than quality, the cultivation is naturally of

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201. Ibid.

202. Ibid.

203. Revenue Report of the Irrigation Department, Punjab 1894-95.

the roughest and poorest character, and the canal is very severely taxed to afford the required supply".[204] It was suggested that in cases where tenants had "recklessly attempted to irrigate more than a certain proportion of their holdings in either harvest, remissions should be restricted."[205]

Strangely though, while on the one hand washing its hands of the responsibility ofor kharābā, government felt entitled to charge ābiānā on the entire land actually irrigated, including that for which kharābā was being claimed.[206] Since the government insisted on asserting its right in terms of charges for water the, cultivator felt equally justified in claiming compensation for crops that had failed to mature on account of what he saw as insufficient irrigation. Till 1912 the government succeeded in having the best of it both ways: disapproving of kharābā which in official terms resulted from improper cultivation and illegal spread of canal water - and charging water-rates for it at the same time. The role of other factors leading to failure of crops or high incidence of kharābā was rarely recognised.

There were other problems as well. What was the unit to be dealth with while granting relief? What was

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204. Ibid.

205. Ibid.

206. Rev.Agri.Rev., January 1915, A.Pro.43, F.7.

to be the scale of relief for varying degrees of crop failure; What authority was empowered to sanction relief? Under what circumstances were suspensions to be converted into remissions, and so on.

Regarding the circumstances in which relief was to be given it was generally believed, up to 1901, that relief was not to be given for up to half a normal crop although it did not follow that the failure of more than half a crop will always justify relief. The need was all this while felt for a standard scale of relief on arithmetical basis, with the degree of relief increasing as the yield decreased. It was finally worked out as follows:[207]

With a 16 anna crop being treated as normal.

Crop	Degree of relief
6 annas and less than 8 annas	25%
4 annas and less than 6 annas	50%
less than 4 annas	100%

Since promptness was an important factor in relief, it was envisaged that a field-to-field, enquiry would be impossible, therefore, it was decided that suspensions be announced on the basis of information compiled by villages or homogeneous groups of villages, and the collector be given the right to make alterations later. Gradually the

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207. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1905, A.Pro.8.

opinion gathered strength that in situations where collection seemed impossible, it was better to remit at once rather than keep the demand hanging over the heads of revenue payers. Revenue which had been under suspension for three years was to be remitted as a matter of course. Government also decided that as a general rule no revenue which had been suspended should be collected until after one fair harvest subsequent to the failure had been reaped in the affected tract.[208]

Having come to an understanding regarding these in 1905, the Department of Revenue and Agriculture heaved a sigh of relief in the belief "that the administration of the fixed land revenue system will be freed from the evils of excessive rigidity which have in some places hitherto attached to it, and that a degree of elasticity will have been introduced - sufficient to ensure that in times of agricultural calamity the burdens of the cultivating classes are not aggravated by any unreasonable insistence on the demands of government."[209]

Even during the time kharābā was retained, it should be clear that no everyone who needed relief, got it. There was, first of all the tedious process of getting relief sanctioned. Since remissions were granted only in cases of grave loss, there were numerous instances, of

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208. Ibid., Pro. 9.

209. Ibid.

crops being damaged but not "sufficiently destroyed" to entitle them to full remissions. Even in the year 1907 when incidence of crop failure was high, full remissions were given on only one branch, the rest getting between 25 to 50 per cent. The assessment report for Upper Jhang Branch Circle narrated how toria, "a crop which gets very little 'kharābā' suffered extensive damage. Whereas in the case of toria it was hard to tell the damage till the crop was cut, it was not always feasible that the cultivator leave the crop standing till the zillādār found time to inspect it - the cultivator had to choose between the option of risking further damage by shelling, frost or rain, or to cut it and forego all kharābā, very often he chose the last.[210] Needless to say that remissions were granted only on crops which had not been cut or grazed prior to kharābā inspection.

The importance of the decision to abolish kharābā in 1912 except in special circumstances can be seen by a glance at the incidence and scale of remission in the first decade of the twentieth century (Tables 3.9-3.11).

The assessment report for the Gugera Branch Circle, I, 1911, stated clearly that in three mauzās the proportion of area irrigated to area allotted was only 30 per cent

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210. A.R. Upper Jhang Branch Circle, LCC, 1911, op.cit.

TABLE 3 .9

EXTENT OF KHARABA - JHANG BRANCH II, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

S. No.(Vill.)	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
172	35	39	12
173	35	17	11
175	20	28	11
176	21	11	14
177	22	17	35
182	39	13	18
183	20	14	11
209	13	12	10
212	15	3	13
216	21	14	7
217	20	9	8
229	19	20	8
230	19	6	6
232	31	14	4
233	17	6	5
247	17	10	3
248	17	5	4
249	21	15	14
257	19	5	11
268	19	8	6
269	24	32	8
276	22	13	13
312	28	28	19
324	18	32	36
329	22	31	18
341	23	28	29
345	30	15	14
373	32	36	26

Source : A.R., Jhang Branch, II, March 1911.

TABLE 3 .10

EXTENT OF KHARABA - JHANG BRANCH III, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

S. No.(Vill.)	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
397	19	29	22
398	25	13	23
399	22	21	21
401	18	36	22
402	19	32	21
406	17	27	16
409	33	11	20
410	32	26	19
411	44	25	37
412	32	22	19
424	20	12	8
438	31	17	11
439	30	21	29
440	22	5	11
442	19	5	11
443	19	6	8
446	15	3	8
447	39	4	12
448	23	9	12
449	19	6	11
450	28	8	13
451	18	47	13
463	29	9	21
469	16	23	18

Source : A.R., Jhang Branch III, 1911.

TABLE 3 .11

EXTENT OF KHARABA - UPPER JHANG BRANCH, L.C.C. IN CLASS 7 AND 8 VILLAGES, IRRIGATED

No. of Villages	1905-1906	1906-1907	1907-1908	1908-1909
157	19.96	29.70	14.9	4.2
156	24.57	29.70	34.1	5.9
154	16.01	26.70	8.1	1.8
144	35.30	33.80	9.8	3.6
145	62.07	57.06	22.9	11.4
153	20.40	32.60	14.2	4.7
136	19.30	30.50	8.4	5.4
141	48.80	38.50	22.9	9.5
137	37.30	57.90	17.2	5.8
129	20.30	28.30	10.6	3.1
107	11.70	30.10	30.1	2.9
99	15.10	34.90	49.09	10.1

Source : A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, 1911.

in the year 1907-08 where there was no rain to supplement canal supply. Of the 30 per cent irrigated also, 20 per cent failed leaving each of these Jangli term grantees only 3 out of 12½ acres matured.[211] On the Rakh Branch Circle with the abolition of kharābā, the area subject to land revenue increased by some 30,000 acres in this one circle alone.[212] Since kharābā was abolished around the same time as fresh assessment was being undertaken, the net increase in the revenue from the canal areas would have been enormous with a corresponding increase in the burden on peasantry.

Interestingly, just two years after the abolition of remissions for failed crops - except in special circumstances - government of Punjab, recognised the power to sanction remissions of land revenue as a reward to villagers who resisted the attacks of dacoits;[213] a few years later, the Secretary, Army Department also recommended grant of remissions to certain sections. Compensation for the "losses to agriculture and kindred industries occasioned by the withdrawal of so large a population for military service, and the stimulus to future recruiting which would be given if government showed in a practical and substantial form its recognition of the exceptional sacrifices made by

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211. A.R.Gugera Branch Circle I, LCC, 1911, op.cit., para 29.

212. A.R. Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit., para 8.

213. Rev.Agri.Rev., March 1914, A.Pro.5, F.89.

particular villages sub-divisions of a village or even familiar in the province."[214]

The question of kharābā had featured prominently among the issues under consideration of the Canal Colonies' Committee. In the evidences before the Committee, offical opinion emerged in favour of dispensing with remissions. Pointing to the link between kharābā and the corruption among lower rung officials of the Irrigation Department, Mullaly, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Works in Punjab, gave the official version of hazards stemming from kharābā: firstly, he said, given the difficulty in accurately estimating a standing crop, "no honest official will ever be able to satisfy a cultivator that the crop has been fairly assessed", secondly kharābā entailed the "deputing of great powers to low paid officials and leads to much extortions".[215]

Illegal extortions were closely linked to grant of remissions. The Deputy Commissioner for Gujranwala, for instance, stated in his evidence before the Canal Colonies' Committee that in many cases on the Lower Chenab Canal, "the Patwāris told the people to pay them Rs.2 a killā in order that they could make recommendations for them, and in many cases the people did so."[216] The Colonisation

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214. Rev.Agri.Rev., July 1919, Pro.34, F.94.

215. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1909, Pro.1-4, Special Question, File , p.103.

216. Ibid., Evidence File, p.556.

Officer to had "heard that considerable sums were paid to zillādārs about the recent large remissions" but did not believe that all those accused were guilty, if the regular Faslānā , which was taken not only in the Colony tracts but all over Punjab, was excluded.[217] While Sardar Khan, lambardar of mauzā 36B, grantee on horse-breeding terms in the Lower Jhelum Colony was of the view that the zillādar often did not give kharābā as, "to do so amounts to a confession of his own fault";[218] The Deputy Collector in the Colony believed that perhaps only "five per cent of the zillādārs may take money".[219] It was "only those zillādārs, who have been promoted from patwāri-ships who still take bribes, but only very few even of these..."[220] The paltry sum of Rs.10 given as salary to a Patwāri was also cited as one reason for the corruption prevalent.

Whether or not zillādārs accepted money from the cultivators, they did not always show sympathy to the peasants' woes; "like all subordinate government officials in this country his (zilladar's) general tendency is to decide every doubt in favour of government and he probably finds it gives him less trouble in the end to be over

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217. Ibid.

218. Ibid., Evidence File, p.62.

219. Ibid., p.81.

220. Ibid.

severe in his assessment than overlenient".[221] The zillādār had strong motives for not granting liberal remissions for failed crops, since majority opinion amongst officials disapproved of the "excessively liberal remissions".[222] Just as revenue demand was found light except for incompetent cultivators, kharābā was considered to be a "premium on bad and careless cultivation", resulting from improper watercourses and distribution arrangements, as also slothfullness in making kiāris and other operations aimed at optimum use of water.[223]

A related problem was that of the assessing agency. Owing to the system under which the assessments both of revenue and water-rates were modified annually by the application of rules regarding kharābā (till such time as kharābā was abolished) the assessing agency occupied a position of special importance in Punjab. For this reason the Canal Department which constituted the assessing agency, maintained a large staff. However, over a period of time, their effectivity and impartiality come to be questioned. Concerned at the complaints against canal officers, the Colonies' Committee explored the possibility of transfer of assessing responsibility to another agency. While on the one hand official opinion attributed complaints against

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221. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1902, A.Pro.33, F.161, op.cit.

222. Ibid.

223. Ibid.

the canal officers to the problem of kharābā, on the other it was felt that it was 'impossible' for the ordinary revenue staff to supervise satisfactory canal assessments on a large scale. Since canal officers were in any case employed on canals, they were readily accessible to people to look into complaint regarding deficient irrigation. It was considered doubtful whether any advantage would be gained by transferring canal assessments from canal officers and their subordinates to Tahsildars and their subordinates; maintenance of a dual subordinate agency seemed the only possible way. In the Committee itself divergent opinions were expressed - with Major Popham Young favouring a radical change under which the whole of the assessments of canal or land revenue dues would be entrusted to revenue authorities, while Mr.Baillie argued that transfer of the work of assessment would not offer a solution since the real cause of problems lay in the system of assessment itself.

The Depression and the Remission Question

The discussion on remissions was reopened in government circles, at the end of the 1920s - the occasion being provided by the unprecedented slump in prices. Having earlier abolished general remission on the grounds that the revenue demand was moderate enough

to be paid in adverse circumstances as well (Section III supra) government had to retrace its steps in the late twenties. Uncollected balances of land revenue soared high as the West Punjab peasantry was exposed to perhaps the worst crisis in international price history. For the first time government had to serously consider sanction of remissions on grounds of a fall in prices. The ruin aggravated by the fact that the Depression came in the wake of a series of bad harvests due to frost, dust-storm, hail, locusts, insect pests, floods, ill-times or excessive rainfall and cattle-disease. Close on all these disasters came the Depression when prices of agricultural commodities fell, in some cases to one-fourth or one-third of the boom period. While on the one hand this gave rise to serious problems stemming from increased insolvency, revenue defaulters and a corresponding congestion in jails, it became obvious that at current prices, the price of the produce of an acre was sometimes "not sufficient for the payment of even government dues."[224] The village survey for Gajju Chak in Lyallpur district recorded that on an average holding the per cent of crop required to meet government demand in 1932 amounted to 71 per cent of the produce in the case of the cotton crop, 75 per cent in the case of sugarcane and 173 per cent in the case of toria."[225]

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224. Report of the Abiana Committee, PWD, Punjab Irrigation Branch, 1934, p.24.

225. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.92.

When special remissions were announced during the depression years, many problems surfaced. Thus, for instance, the zilladar who inspected the crop was not in a position to give remission of fields which deserved it but for which no darkhwast had been submitted; while the truth was that many Colonists, and Janglis, refrained from applying as "rightly or wrongly, they have come to think that no useful purpose would be served by doing so."[226] Drawing attention to defects which could be easily rectified a settlement officer confessed that he himself was not fully aware of the process by which kharaba was applied for and granted. An application though given on time, was not admitted if the field number given and the field was identifiable. He felt that in the "more inaccessible parts of the jangli tract, general ignorance of even the square numbers, not to mention field numbers, effectively prevents submission of genuine petitions. Sometimes where square numbers are cited by the more intelligent janglis, the effort is often infructuous because the numbers quoted relate to the records of the first settlement."[227] Often patwaris did not furnish the requisite information without illegal gratification. Essentially the system of granting

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226. A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.40.

227. Ibid.

TABLE 3.12

REMISSIONS DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS

	Tahsil/Circles	Total Abiana Demand Rs.	Remission (Abiana) 1928-29 to 1932-33 Rs.	Remissions land revenue Rs.
1.	Jaranwala	1,79,45,655	4,72,594	8,79,833
2.	Lyallpur	1,98,64,206	5,09,712	8,88,382
3.	Samundri	1,70,73,377	4,37,832	8,37,929
4.	Toba Tek Singh	1,70,00,919	6,14,886	9,06,208
5.	New Extensions	11,10,005	5,568	9,541
6.	Rakh Branch Circle (Sheikhupura district)	72,60,708	1,88,061	3,00,181
7.	Lahore	-	-	85,562*

* For 1930-32 only.

Source: S.R., Lyallpur, 1940, p. 21; A.R., Lahore, 1939, p. 5.

legitimate relief, presupposed a standard of literacy and knowledge totally lacking in most cases. In order to simplify the process it was proposed that "lambardārs be empowered to submit kharābā petitions for their entire pattis" without taking away the right of individual cultivators to submit petitions.[228]

But the question whether relief granted to the revenue payer was extended to the actual cultivators of the soil remained? Punjab supposedly had legislative provisions for this, and government further clarified that in cases where extension of relief to tenants could not be ensured, legislation may be enacted to preclude from relief (a) bad landlords and rack-renters (b) well-to-do landowners whose solvency was not threatened and (c) those capitalists, moneylenders and professional classes who held land purely as an investment.[229] Already section 30 of the tenancy Act (XVI of 1887) empowered a Revenue Officer, when the revenue of any land had been suspended or remitted, to suspend or remit the rent of the land, whatever the nature of the may be. The question that arose was - should the rent be suspended or remitted if a fraction of the land revenue had been suspended or remitted? Or should this be done only when the harvest

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228. Ibid.

229. Rev.Agri.Rev., May 1905, A.Pro.9.

was a complete failure in which case the tenant would have no produce at all in any case? If the benefits of a revenue suspension were to be extended to a tenant then how would the landlord recover it in case of a change of tenant during the period of suspension and due date of payment? In the course of this discussion it emerged that in fact the provisions of section 30 of the Tenancy Act were not properly applicable to a rent which was a definite share of the produce, and that in practice the section never had been enforced with respect to such lands.[230] It was now proposed to legislate to this effect and clarify hat this provision would apply to (1) rent payable in kind of which the amount is fixed and (2) cash rents.[231] Officials argued that in Punjab it was rare for an occupancy tenant to be denied a share in the benefit, from remission or suspension of land revenue. Also while legally the tenants-at-will were not covered by this section, in Punjab "the demand for tenants is greater than the supply and they are able to make their own terms with their landlords".[232] It was also felt that "a well-to-do tenant who happens to have the means in a bad year may prefer to pay up when he can rather than wait for the order of realisation of the land revenue, and voluntary payments

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230. Rev.Agri.Rev., March 1905, Pro. 8.

231. Ibid.

232. Ibid.

of this nature by a tenant to his landlord should not be interfered with."[233] (emphasis added).

It was, proposed to give revenue officers the right to remit cash rents or rents payable in kind for land of which revenue had been remitted. The order passed in favour of the tenant was to be enforceable by means of the imposition of a fine which could be recovered as if it were an arrear of land revenue. This was done so that the landlord should not be free, as under the prevailing law, to accept liability under sub-sections (5) for the payment of his own suspended land revenue and to realize the suspended rent by threatening his tenant with eviction."[234] However, government was not bound to refund the fine imposed on the landlord. The revenue officer was not directed to offer a refund in all cases. Even during the depression; government was not willing to straightaway sanction remissions. In fact two of the prominent members of the Abiana Committee, set up to enquire into the question whether remission was called for, argued that reduction in water rates was neighter 'practicable', nor 'justifiable'.[235] While the other members of the Committee pointed out that peasants assets had suffered terribly:

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233. Ibid.
234. Ibid.
235. Report of the Abiana Committee, op.cit., p.4.

> "Not only as compared with the boom period, but also as compared with 1905-06, a year which really marks the end of a by-gone economic era. The economic handicap which the price level of agricultural produce today imposes on the agriculturists vis-a-vis the price level of 1905-06 is very grave indeed when we consider the distance of time which separates the two periods and the gulf of entirely changed economic parities which intervene between the two points of time. In the intervening period land revenue has been enhanced at least once in every part of the province. Water-rates have been revised the disadvantage of the occupier during the same period at least once on every canal and more than once on some of the canals. In the case of all valuable crops, all crops which in normal times used to bring in money, the revision of rates has resulted in an immense rise, the rise in the case of cotton, sugar-cane and wheat being no less than 120, 112 and 110 per cent respectively. The combined effects of unprecedented slump in prices, abnormally high water-rates, a vigorous system of the collection of government dues, and the crushing burden of indebtedness have reduced the agriculturist to an economic wreck, and it is up to government now to rescue him."[236]

The Committee recommended a reduction of Rs.1 crore considering that a figure lower than that would "take away from the effectiveness of the relief which is urgently needed." This figure, it was pointed out, represented I.D. Peeny, official member on the Abiana Committee argued against grant of remissions on water-rates on the grounds that little benefit would accrue to the tenant from such a measure; since on land under cash rents the relief or burden would fall on landlords

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236. Ibid., p.39.

in any case while batai rents were not easily adjusted to changes. A reduction in occupiers' rate would prompt the landlord to attempt to appropriate increased rent, though his success would depend on the relative strength vis-a-vis the tenant. Given the prevailing high pitch of rents, Penny was inclined to believe that landlords were likely to succeed in this effort:

> "a reduction in ābiānā will not with any certainty benefit the poorest classes of the agricultural population in Canal irrigated areas."[237]

Despite the official member's fervent plea agains it, the depression years saw remissions being granted - the only time when remissions were granted on account of fall in prices - although of only up to Rs.50 lakhs, which was far below what the Abiana Committee had recommended, and negligible in view of the hike in water charges in the years immediately preceding the Depression.

The granting of these remissions could not have brought relief to all, though. The settlement report for for Lyallpur district recorded that:

> "many poor peasants maintain that it is only the more vocal and influential cultivators who derive benefit from it. The fact that many inferior villages of poor jangli cultivators situated far away on the fringes of Samundri and Toba Tek Singh tahsils have never been allowed a single acre of kharābā lends colour to this complaint. It will

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237. Ibid., Appendix, pp.12-13.

> be argued that the peasants themselves are to blame, as they never care to apply for remissions; but the absence of claims, in some measure is due to the conviction that the result will not be fruitful."[238]

Conclusion /

In conclusion we may note the following trends with regard to the land revenue and irrigation charges: the land revenue from the Colony districts increased remarkably during these years; while the increase in cultivated area was also notable, it could not keep pace with the former. Consequently apart from an absolute increase, the incidence per acre was accompanied by an increase in cesses and other dues, further contributing to the burden on the peasantry. Government's search for avenues for increase also led to its attempts at scaling revenue on various grounds such as improvement in land and productivity, increase in prices, security provided by irrigation all of which contributed to an ever-increasing estimate of net assets which constituted the basis of assessment. Further use of cash rents as the basis for the cultivation of net assets was in itself doubtful, and definitely worked against the smaller cultivators, who usually cultivated poorer lands. When in 1928 revenue for land was fixed at quarter-net assets as against half net assets earlier

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238. S.R. Lyallpur, 1940, p.20.

the total demand contrary to logic went up, that too during and just after the depression years. We also discuss the process of distribution of water, the problems faced by those cultivating land at the tail of the distributaries and the harassment cultivators suffered at the hands of the canal bureaucracy. The excessive demand and insecurity of canal supply were together reflected in the incidence of kharābā. Government, however, resisted any attempt to link these, and went ahead with abolition of kharābā except under special circumstances. The devastation brought about by the depression and the consequent announcement of remissions, though nominal exposed the hollowness of government's claims that revenue assessments were made keeping in mind all contingencies and ought to be paid in good and bad years. The smaller peasants, cultivating bad lands in fact benefitted least from the remissions announced.

What reflection did such a policy find in the pattern of economic development? Where did the peasants, thrown headlong into the all-pervasive 'market' find themselves? How far did the benefits of rising prices reach the peasantry? These are some of the questions we turn to in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CROPS AND THE MARKET

In this chapter we look at the crop acreages and cropping patterns that emerged, consequent upon Colonisation of the vast tracts of Western Punjab. What were the agricultural methods adopted? How did these differ or how did the peasant adapt to this new mode of life, vastly different from the leisurely pace of semi-nomadic pastoralists who inhabited the region prior to Colonisation? We examine the market and trade patterns that emerged, follow fluctuations of the price curve, and its repercussions on the peasant and on official policy. Tracing the journey of the agricultural produce, from the village market to the port, via the mandi, we examine the commercial network and the nature of peasant interaction with it. Was it another example of a distressed, dependent peasantry caught involuntarily in a vortex of commercial relations, as the nationalists argued, or was the peasant advantageously placed prospering as a consequence of both, Colonisation and an unprecedented boom, as the officials argued? Did integration into the market strengthen the position of the agriculturist, or did it only enhance his vulnerability, both individually and collectively?

SECTION 1 : CROPPING PATTERN:

We have noted the extent of increase in cultivated area

in the Canal Colony region. It may be pointed out that most of the regions which came under cultivation as a consequence of canal irrigation were also double cropped, yielding both Rabi and Kharif harvests. Table 4.1 below, shows the Kharif and Rabi acreages from 1888 to 1920. It can be seen that in 1888, both Kharif and Rabi harvests started off with fairly close acreages. The period 1890-92, marked the first bout of an increasing gap between the two, trend noticed again in 1899. While 1901 marked a convergence point, 1902 saw the beginning of a period of a consistent increase in Rabi, with the peak being matched by a depression in the Kharif index, as in 1906, 1912, 1915 and again in 1916.

Over the years, a trend was established of increasingly larger share of cropping being contributed by the Rabi harvest with the Kharif acreage not necessarily shrinking, but definitely occupying lesser importance in the total cropping average. The assessment reports for the Rakh, Jhang and Gugera branch circles in the Lower Chenab Colony in fact noted, in 1911-12, an " extraordinary steady decline of the Kharif crop in popularity", and confirmed that, " some very strong reasons must exist to cause these results."[1] Dispelling doubts that this decline was due to the Western Punjabi's prejudice, one report pointed out that half the land in the circle was held eitner by the mid-Punjab peasant reported to be the best cultivators, or by nazrana-paying grantees; it was argued that "both classes

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1 Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, A Pro. 24, F14, para. 7.

TABLE 4.1

CROPPING IN CANAL AREAS -MINOR WORKS

YEAR	AREA IRRIGATED, IN ACRES		
	KHARIF	RABI	TOTAL
1887-1888	505,095	413,233	918,323
1888-1889	571,558	425,870	997,428
1889-1890	542,112	452,598	994,710
1890-1891	520,408	462,548	982,956
1891-1892	452,490	596,664	1,049,154
1892-1893	491,151	588,558	1,079,709
1893-1894	409,917	548,747	958,664
1894-1895	500,248	563,048	1,063,296
1895-1896	477,957	461,243	939,200
1896-1897	533,745	426,365	960,110
1897-1898	565,582	592,778	1,158,360
1898-1899	453,402	530,862	984,264
1899-1900	520,893	338,629	859,522
1900-1901	669,563	688,136	1,357,699
1901-1902	508,416	573,105	981,521
1902-1903	424,819	390,871	815,690
1903-1904	316,418	463,129	779,547
1904-1905	296,636	320,616	617,252
1905-1906	298,279	452,788	751,067
1906-1907	295,898	507,419	803,317
1907-1908	258,074	266,484	524,558
1908-1909	442,088	526,008	968,096
1909-1910	426,020	543,587	969,607
1910-1911	459,270	497,015	956,285
1911-1912	402,641	459,606	862,247
1912-1913	467,957	500,173	968,130
1913-1914	464,872	506,871	971,743
1914-1915	466,107	613,306	1,079,413
1915-1916	362,607	539,672	902,279
1916-1917	452,348	633,609	1,085,957
1917-1918	463,729	613,784	1,077,513

Source: Administration Report of the Irrigation Branch, P.W.D., Punjab 1919.

TABLE 4.2

CROPPING IN CANAL AREAS- MAJOR WORKS

YEAR	AREA IRRIGATED, IN ACRES		
	KHARIF	RABI	TOTAL
1887-1888	645,846	776,929	1,422,776
1888-1889	715,632	1,034,325	1,749,957
1889-1890	661,677	1,201,770	1,863,456
1890-1891	757,535	1,275,965	2,033,500
1891-1892	697,454	1,446,938	2,144,392
1892-1893	323,235	1,024,647	1,347,882
1893-1894	711,001	1,192,653	1,903,654
1894-1895	703,930	1,151,928	1,855,858
1895-1896	985,827	1,866,556	2,852,383
1896-1897	1,534,969	2,114,334	3,649,303
1897-1898	1,777,565	2,275,724	4,053,289
1898-1899	1,413,822	2,458,679	3,872,501
1899-1900	1,888,398	2,496,574	4,384,972
1900-1901	2,354,174	2,288,678	4,642,852
1901-1902	1,686,043	2,805,795	4,491,838
1902-1903	2,071,363	2,792,911	4,864,274
1903-1904	2,450,739	3,160,048	5,610,787
1904-1905	2,381,786	3,307,346	5,689,132
1905-1906	2,294,460	3,868,911	6,163,371
1906-1907	2,435,219	3,467,776	5,902,995
1907-1908	2,226,291	3,289,095	5,515,386
1908-1909	2,695,518	3,689,532	6,385,050
1909-1910	2,285,870	3,831,134	6,117,004
1910-1911	2,254,333	4,016,424	6,270,757
1911-1912	2,755,324	4,714,321	7,469,645
1912-1913	2,929,309	4,531,942	7,461,251
1913-1914	3,069,950	4,281,771	7,351,721
1914-1915	3,184,751	4,698,877	7,883,628
1915-1916	2,886,578	5,095,954	7,982,532
1916-1917	3,441,467	5,052,400	8,493,867
1917-1918	3,333,822	4,652,566	7,986,386

Source: Administration Report of the Irrigation Branch, P.W.D., Punjab 1919.

are quick enough to see what pays best and at present it is the Rabi crop which does so..."[2] The Jhang Branch Circle II report pointed out that the overriding importance of Rabi was most marked in immigrant villages, "whose inhabitants are here not because they love the place for that they certainly do not, but because they are making money. They are quick to adapt themselves to the cropping system which pays best, and it is their acuteness and adaptability and not the sloth of their western neighbours that is responsible for the existing ratio between Kharif and Rabi in the Chenab Colony."[3] The report endorsed the cultivators' choice of crop by conceding that the ordinary sandy loam of the region was chiefly fit for wheat, toria and gram. Meanwhile, the Jangli still had a good proportion of his holding under Kharif crop.

The irrigation authorities would have liked to see the Kharif area approximate more to the Rabi area. However, as the Settlement Officer for the Lower Chenab Colony pointed out, this was unlikely to happen, " unless the schedule of occupiers' rates is radically altered..."[4] This seemed equally unlikely, as, 'it would be very hard to devise a schedule which

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2 Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, A Pro. 25, F14, para.8.

3. Ibid.

4. Rev. Agri. Rev. March 1911, A. Pro 24 F14 op.cit., para.7.

would result in increasing the Kharif area materially and yet bring in the same income from the occupiers' rates that now prevails."[5]

Interestingly, the trend towards decline in Kharif was somewhat arrested in the Depression years which witnessed a shortfall in Rabi, speciafically a marked decline in wheat acreages. While the slight arrest in the trend that had prevailed upto the Depression cannot be exaggerated, it may be useful to record that during the depression years, almost all tahsils of Lyallpur district registered a marginal increase, of 1%, in Kharif acreage.

Table 4.3 (a) to (g) below gives the crop acreages for the major crops. Clearly, wheat in the Rabi and cotton in Kharif, remained the two most important crops in the economy of these districts. However, while the overall importance of these two crops remained undisputed all through this period, periodic shifts or fluctuations were not ruled out.

Notably in three districts, Lyallpur, Lahore and Gujranwala the area under foodgrains registered a net decline after 1916-17, accompanied by an occasional fall in foodgrain acreage in other districts as well. The decline in food-grain area, coincided, almost totally, with a significant decline in the area under wheat. This made all the difference to the Rabi harvest in most districts, since the cultivation of gram, Jwar,

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5. Ibid.

TABLE 4.3

PROPORTION OF CULTIVATED AREA UNDER SELECT CROPS (Percentag

Years	Wheat	Jawar	Bajra	Maize	Sugar cane	Cotton	Fodder
		(a)	Lyallpur				
1904-05	44.94	-	-	-	2.33	12.59	11.20
1905-06	43.80	-	-	-	0.41	0.23	11.67
1906-07	43.65	-	-	-	1.31	10.03	11.79
1907-08	42.41	-	-	-	2.77	9.48	13.62
1908-09	39.07	1.28	0.79	5.19	2.40	9.92	14.22
1909-10	40.95	0.85	.9	5.05	2.91	7.41	15.58
1910-11	42.50	0.82	0.52	4,54	2.49	8.82	15.83
1915-16	44.44	0.34	0.51	4.48	2.55	6.73	19.15
1916-17	41.69	0.27	0.96	4.42	3.12	7.75	17.15
1917-18	39.61	0.08	0.85	3.90	3.26	10.15	15.68
1918-19	40.76	0.09	0.73	3.68	2.65	14.36	7.81
1919-20	38.91	0.18	1.18	3.40	2.03	15.42	17.68
1920-21	39.27	0.12	0.70	2.98	2.48	15.41	18.61
1931-32	32.94	0.21	1.20	2.84	3.86	16.06	18.22
1932-33	32.38	0.24	1.40	3.40	3.86	18.54	20.01
1936-37	35.76	0.10	1.18	2.78	2.44	20.31	20.04
1937-38	37.01	10.12	0.96	2.90	1.9	24.00	20.55
1938-39	35.75	0.14	1.02	2.80	1.66	22.06	21.87
1939-40	36.62	0.21	1.14	2.77	2.32	20.83	22.46
		(b)	Gujranwala				
1908-09	35.19	3.19	3.78	2.79	1.96	5.68	10.79
1909-10	35.35	2.93	3.40	2.54	1.90	4.66	10.37
1910-11	40.05	3.33	2.51	2.54	2.32	4.62	11.50
1915-16	41.42	1.17	2.10	2.70	1.93	3.23	14.29
1916-17	37.74	1.44	4.30	2.38	2.39	4.35	12.04
1917-18	36.66	0.50	3.24	1.95	2.76	6.23	10.48
1918-19	41.30	0.35	3.16	2.50	2.76	6.21	13.96
1919-20	36.56	0.62	4.17	1.20	2.66	5.07	11.82
1920-21	40.62	0.57	2.24	1.20	3.08	4.76	14.15
1931-32	37.54	0.37	5.48	0.93	2.34	4.59	13.97
1932-33	36.30	0.37	6.04	1.00	2.72	4.25	15.34
1936-37	36.10	0.36	3.66	0.80	3.00	6.58	14.49
1937-38	38.86	0.31	3.47	0.79	2.54	6.61	15.89
1938-39	41.42	0.40	3.83	0.85	2.36	4.78	16.11
1939-40	40.42	0.36	4.59	0.84	2.18	4.55	15.22

Con'td.. Table 4.3

PROPORTION OF CULTIVATED AREA UNDER SELECT CROPS (Percentage)

Years	Wheat	Jawar	Bajra	Maize	Sugar cane	Cotton	Fodder
			(c) Montgomery				
-	37.13	-	-	-	0.07	6.73	10.32
1904-05	31.07	-	-	-	0.09	8.52	18.08
1905-06	37.42	-	-	-	0.05	0.03	11.00
1906-07	47.80	-	-	-	0.08	2.18	8.47
1907-08	42.90	-	-	-	0.19	7.10	14.62
1908-09	39.71	0.78	3.32	2.09	0.13	5.92	10.27
1909-10	42.81	1.44	1.82	2.60	0.13	2.62	7.19
1910-11	40.70	1.62	1.30	2.95	0.17	5.41	10.48
1915-16	38.64	2.16	2.23	3.05	0.19	5.01	22.54
1916-17	37.87	1.65	2.89	3.72	0.40	8.61	19.72
1917-18	39.03	0.22	1.58	2.61	0.71	13.71	17.21
1918-19	36.78	0.26	0.50	3.50	0.78	21,41	19.08
1919-20	33.47	0.39	1.56	3.25	0.46	23.12	20.28
1920-21	33.28	0.52	0.98	1.99	0.75	23.10	23.47
1931-32	31.88	0.29	1.80	1.62	1.36	19.10	21.77
1932-33	31.02	0.28	2.43	1.76	1.40	18.77	22.90
1936-37	29.15	0.10	1.90	1.46	-	-	25.55
1937-38	30.65	0.14	1.33	1.39	-	-	26.28
1938-39	30.75	0.08	1.42	1.39	-	-	26.57
1939-40	30.76	0.08	2.08	1.37	0.66	23.72	26.83
			(d) Shahpur				
1908-09	39.91	3.27	11.80	1.62	0.60	10.13	6.15
1909-10	43.51	2.71	9.37	1.75	0.72	7.24	6.09
1910-11	43.75	3.38	9.43	1.66	0,70	8.05	7.12
1915-16	46.00	1.64	4.94	1.94	0.62	6.42	18.44
1916-17	41.12	1.13	9.94	1.47	0.71	5.85	14.00
1917-18	38.91	0.73	8.21	1.56	0.91	7.69	12.81
1918-19	40.02	0.62	6.39	1.98	0.75	9.99	17.59
1919-20	37.20	1.27	8.42	1.42	0.46	11.95	14.18
1920-21	35.28	1.15	7.99	1.38	0.66	11.15	16.73
1931-32	31.22	1.65	8.39	1.52	0.59	11.39	15.35
1932-33	32.61	1.36	9.29	1.40	0.67	11.32	16.44
1936-37	30.78	1.47	7.55	1.52	-	-	17.17
1937-38	33.72	1.21	6.95	1.77	-	-	19.54
1938-39	32.34	1.30	7.77	1.57	0.51	14.96	19.63
1939-40	32.95	1.90	7.91	1.44	0.63	14.23	19.45

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Cont'd.. Table 4.3

PROPORTION OF CULTIVATED AREA UNDER SELECT CROPS

(Percentage)

Years	Wheat	Bajra	Maize	Sugarcane	Cotton	Fodder
		(e) Jhang				
1903-04	44.26			1.82	11.75	8.54
1904-05	44.19			0.18	6.99	9.95
1905-06	45.83			0.04	1.41	9.75
1906-07	48.14			0.11	4.95	9.63
1907-08	45.52			0.32	6.19	11.12
1908-09	41.32			0.23	6.98	6.47
1909-10	46.27			0.24	5.83	9.07
1910-11	47.37			0.19	6.43	14.72
1915-16	48.64			0.18	6.67	18.87
1916-17	45.58			0.23	5.64	16.45
1917-18	28.77			0.24	5.85	14.00
1918-19	45.84			0.38	10.82	18.70
1919-20	44.89			0.13	10.49	17.46
1920-21	46.44			0.17	10.55	13.00
1931-32	40.83			0.59	10.32	19.81
1932-33	39.84			0.60	10.50	20.71
1936-37	40.38			0.38	12.87	21.84
1937-38	41.94			0.39	14.25	24.06
1938-39	42.04			0.35	12.53	24.03
1939-40	42.20			0.54	11.96	24.68

Cont'd.. Table 4.3

PROPORTION OF CULTIVATED AREA UNDER SELECT CROPS
(Percentage)

(f) LAHORE

Year	Wheat	Jowar	Bajra	Maize	Sugarcane	Cotton	Fodder
1906-07	42.18	1.30	0.66	4.66	0.23	3.58	10.92
1907-08	38.20	1.10	0.98	6.43	0.72	10.29	19.70
1908-09	33.40	0.95	1.81	4.70	0.53	10.95	12.74
1909-10	35.29	1.33	0.98	4.39	0.82	7.41	12.34
1910-11	36.99	1.24	0.75	4.47	1.10	9.26	15.74
1915-16	41.19	0.12	0.69	4.38	0.77	6.43	17.59
1916-17	36.34	0.12	2.80	4.41	0.87	9.19	16.74
1917-18	36.42	0.06	1.53	3.15	1.10	12.24	16.16
1918-19	34.10	0.06	1.32	4.48	2.14	11.77	20.13
1919-20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1920-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1931-32	25.84	0.01	3.97	1.39	1.89	13.19	18.06
1932-33	27.80	0.03	5.05	2.25	2.65	11.17	24.63
1933-34	24.67	0.52	3.79	2.30	1.35	14.65	18.90
1934-35	23.21	0.02	3.68	3.20	1.45	15.89	24.88
1935-36	25.51	0.04	2.84	2.82	1.67	18.97	24.89
1936-37	24.65	0.08	3.85	2.44	2.13	16.90	23.12
1937-38	27.95	0.03	2.15	2.45	1.72	19.25	25.04
1938-39	28.77	0.16	2.60	2.59	0.85	18.25	24.59
1939-40	27.86	0.03	2.98	2.85	1.15	17.01	25.86
(g) MULTAN							
1906-07	43.69	6.63	3.90	0.41	0.13	7.14	6.49
1907-08	38.41	7.69	3.96	0.49	0.26	10.89	8.51
1908-09	40.32	7.25	6.55	0.39	0.19	5.61	7.08
1909-10	40.42	6.39	4.92	0.49	0.25	8.65	6.82
1910-11	41.27	7.88	4.25	0.44	0.30	8.66	7.58
1915-16	40.85	5.82	4.44	0.48	0.19	6.96	11.48
1916-17	40.15	6.70	5.76	0.69	0.15	4.76	16.52
1917-18	39.02	3.53	3.56	0.62	0.28	10.40	17.46
1918-19	38.19	3.20	2.26	0.82	0.50	17.63	19.35
1919-20	38.02	4.73	3.59	0.58	0.33	17.48	16.02
1920-21	37.16	4.42	2.93	0.49	0.37	18.98	17.94
1931-32	35.15	4.95	2.18	0.59	0.84	15.27	17.21
1932-33	34.77	4.72	3.58	0.72	1.04	13.00	17.97
1933-34	35.53	4.10	2.89	0.64	0.70	16.77	16.56
1934-35	33.84	4.49	2.89	0.83	0.65	18.53	18.86
1935-36	33.36	4.27	1.95	0.64	0.74	22.89	18.55
1936-37	32.58	3.75	2.18	0.55	0.82	22.80	16.73
1937-38	32.57	3.05	2.10	0.59	0.63	26.11	18.44
1938-39	32.13	3.23	1.77	0.58	0.32	26.90	19.04
1939-40	34.29	2.78	2.37	0.58	0.38	33.77	19.11

Source : ASBI, relevant years.

maize and bajra had been marginal since the spread of canal irrigation. Generally on canal lands wheat was grown, while the other staples were assigned a place on the non-canal-irrigated lands. Amongst these, in the early years, maize maintained a fixed area, partly due to its being a tradition with the mid-Punjab peasant and partly due to maize prices in the Colony being high enough to make it paying. The tendency to devote canal lands to the more valuable wheat crop was sharply brought out by the contrast that Shahpur presented to Lyallpur. In Khushab tahsil, Shahpur, which was primarily non-canal irrigated, gram cultivation was said to have been "recently discovered," while bajra, taramira, jwar, cotton, wheat and pulses were " other important crops".[6]

It may be pointed out that the state machinery kept itself informed of shifts in acreages of important crops. Shrinkage in wheat area was a matter of primary concern to government. Thus early in 1917, when wheat acreage in the Canal Colony area, including Lyallpur, which had by now earned for itself the epithet of the 'Granary of the World', declined, the Secretary of State for India considered the matter important enough to write to the Viceroy: "that utmost effort should be made as quickly as possible to increase wheat area in India as far as possible."[7] The government of Punjab was

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6 A.R., Khushab, 1915, op.cit., p.58

7 Rev. Agri. Rev, Jan. 1917, A, Pro.12., F 239 of 1916.

asked to explore whether, "anything can be done either by Government advice to cultivators or by provision of special irrigation facilities in the case of wheat..."[8]

The alarm and concern expressed above needs to be viewed in the context of the war and high prices of foodgrains especially wheat, prevailing in England and India at this time. Understandably, no such emergency was felt in the Depression years when, once again, a sharp fall in wheat acerage was noticed. In Lyallpur district, Samundri tahsil alone registered a drop of 10,000 acres or 20%; In Toba Tek Singh tahsil, the area under wheat fell by nearly 12,000 acres. In Lyallpur tahsil itself, wheat acreage came down by 7,000 acres during the depression.[9]

Non Food Grain Crops:

What happened when wheat acreage declined? which crops gained?

As far as foodgrains were concerned, shrinkage in wheat was generally favourable to other staples particularly gram. This was very noticeable during the Depression, when gram "appreciated remarkably, "mainly because it was easy and profitable to grow, and even its prices compared favourably with that of wheat in the difficult years.[10] Gram also gained

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8 Ibid.

9 A.R., Samundri, op. cit., p.20; A.R. Toba Tek Singh, op. cit., p.13, and A.R. Lyallpur, op. cit., p.14.

10. A.R., Samundri, op. cit., p.20

because it was a hardy crop , which did not occupy the land for very long, flourished in comparatively poor sandy soil and even enriched exhausted soils.

But above all, in years of shrinkage of foodgrain acreage, cotton registered an increase. While this was clearly the case in Lyallpur and Lahore, except in Gujranwala, in no district did the area under cotton fall below the 1905 level. Increase in cotton acreage was not spectacular in Jhang, Lahore, Multan or Shahpur, while in Lyallpur cotton acreage went up by over 250,000 between 1905 and 1940 and, in Montgomery by almost 400,000 acres. In Montgomery, the years 1935 to 1940 saw a close correspondence between acreages under wheat and cotton, a feature not common to any other district. Meanwhile, Multan and to an extent Lahore, saw the most frequent fluctuations in acreages for both wheat and cotton.[11]

What contributed to these fluctuations?

From the various explanatory comments found scattered amongst the crop reports, no single factor can be pin-pointed, though periodic crop failure and price level emerge as strong reasons affecting the peasant's decision-making. In addition to this, the nature of canal supply, its timing, availability of water, made considerable difference to the situation.

In the case of cotton, the assessment report for Mailsi

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11 ASBI, relevant years,

tahsil, Multan, recording that cotton had never been too "popular" with tenants in the tahsil, added that when canal supply was good at the time of sowing and extended into the cold weather, " the cropped area at once rises."[12] The village survey for Durrana Langana reiterated this, ascribing the recent popularity of cotton to "its high price and to the extension of the Sidhani (canal) to this village".[13] The settlement officer, Lower Chenab Canal, while disapproving of the practice of having annual closures of the Canal in April, which acted as a check on the planting of cotton and restricted the area under Kharif confirmed this.[14]

In the early years, when prices were not too high, cotton suffered owing to the vagaries of its outturn. However, after 1917 or so, once cotton prices started to rise, production registered a steady increase. Beforemoving on to substitutes when cotton acreage declined, it is necessary to take note of the fact that in the case of this crop an equally important phenomenon was substitution by a different variety of the same crop, i.e., the American 4-F cotton. The substitution of the American variety for the desi was by no means, a spontaneous step. We have elsewhere discussed the measures taken by GOI,

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12 A.R., Mailsi., Sept. 1920, op-cit., para.31.

13 BEIP, PVS 11, op.cit., p.49

14 Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1911, A, Pro 27, F14, para.7.

and the government in Punjab to promote growth of American cotton, under pressure from the British cotton manufacturers' lobby.[15] Conditional land grants, crop experiments, supply of American seed and so on were a few of these, while the high price of American cotton itself offered an incentive to the peasant. As a result of a combination of these trends, the acreage under American cotton continued to rise in the 1920s. This despite the fact that the American variety failed to establish its supremacy vis-a-vis the desi variety. It was even found that in many districts the sturdy desis found more favour with the cultivators in comparison with the American variety which suited only land rich in soil and water. On this point, however, even the official reports are contradictory. While the Royal Commission on Agriculture highlighted the rapid spread of the American variety, the reports of the operations of the Department of Agriculture, Punjab, confirmed that by the 1920s, the advantages of desi cotton were clear to the best agriculturist and so was their preference for these varieties.[16] But then the contradiction perhaps lay between the government's experience and imperial needs.

In any case the march of the American variety was halted by the Depression, when American cotton clearly "suffered a reverse."[17] In Samundri tahsil, acreage under the American variety went down from 10% to 8.2% while that of desi rose

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15 See I. Agnihotri: "Some Aspects of Economic Development in the Canal Colonies: 1890-1935," M.Phil submitted to JNU, unpub. 1977, Chap. III.

16 Cf. R.C.A., 1927,

17 A.R., Samundri, op.cit., p. 20.

from 6.4% to 7.8%.[18] Surprisingly, the Janglis exclusively grew the American variety while the immigrant peasant settlers were not in favour of it, given its requirement for richer soil, good manuring, more water, and its susceptibility to disease. The latter's preference for the desi became clear once there was "not much difference in the price of the two varieties."[19] The official reports give no explanation for Janglis growing more American cotton. There could be several possible answers: a) the Janglis being relatively new to settled agriculture were yet to acquire sufficient knowledge regarding different crop varieties and their relative profitability, to take quick decisions regarading cropping; b) they could be under pressure from moneylenders or others to whom they were indebted and who were interested in larger cultivation of American cotton, c) there was a greater time lag between the fall in prices of American cotton and other crops and the Janglis' response to the changing economic situation. The Lyallpur tahsil assessment report confirmed this, recording a fall in acreage of American cotton from 38,286 to 26,686 acres between 1923-28 and 1928-33, while that under desi went up from 35,943 to 46,447 acres in the same period.[20]

When cotton acreage went down, which crop gained?
In Lyallpur villages cotton and sugarcane were "to some extent,

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18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.14

competing crops, and when the area under cotton falls that under sugarcane tends to increase"[21] The figures for 1905, 1909, 1914 and 1922 seemed to bear this out. At the same time, increase in area under cotton generally coincided with a fall in that of sugarcane. Nevertheless, the expansion of areas under sugarcane was generally less than the contraction in cotton area, suggesting that some other crop or crops also gained. Chief among these was toria, which too had "wide fluctuations", but tended to show high acreage returns when cotton showed a downward trend.[22] In fact, toria seems to have gained from periodic shifts in cotton, sugarcane and wheat acreages. That this was not without official intent, may be deduced from the fact that while sugarcane registered a consistant increase its popularity was not palatable to the officials - primarily since its cultivation did not serve colonial interests in the same way as did the expansion of area under cotton or wheat - both crops which occupied an important place in the unequal trade between India and Britain. Consequently, diversion of a valuable resource, namely water, to this crop was not desirable and, "some civil officers as well as canal officers though it would be a good thing to restrict it."[23] Consequently it was decided to raise water rates for sugarcane.[24] Toria, meanwhile, did not enter into such open clash with official objective since it was

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21 BEIP, PVS., 4, p.29

22 Ibid., p.30

23 I.I.C., App., Evidence, Punjab, p.27

24 Fodder crops of the Punjab, 1912, p.26

"in the ground for only some 3½ months, required but little water, and that mainly at a time when wheat sowings have not commenced".[25] It hit off well with the peasants since apart from its being a reasonably paying crop it did not make too many demands on their energies.

Another feature of the cropping pattern that emerged subsequent to canal irrigation was the increase in fodder crops in both, the Kharif and Rabi harvests. In the early years the popularity of fodders, on the Lower Chenab Colony was ascribed to the presence of a large number of Janglis and Hithāris. On the well lands too, in Jhang district, turnips and other fodders were an important crop - partly also because they helped prepare the land for wheat. In Lahore, the demand for fodder and milk, was "steadily growing".[26] Fodder especially, was found to be a "profitable crop because when sold it is usually sold standing and is transported to Lahore by the buyer; the owner has no expense on account of reaping or winnowing and he can usually get his land free early for the next harvest. Much land near the metalled roads grows two harvests of fodder every year and the prices obtained are often far above those assumed."[27] In Durrana Langana, similarly, fodders had increased

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25 A.R., Lahore; 1939, p.13

26 Ibid.

27 BEIP, PVS II, p.50

"owing to the nearness of Multan city where they find a ready market and are sold green."[28] Here again the responsibility for cutting and transportation rested with the buyer. This saved the cultivator the labour of harvesting and conveying charges, which he incurred in the case of cotton and wheat. Lyallpur villages reported a "tendency to grow fodder for their cattle on the rented area, "on the part of owners who took additional land on cash rent.[29]

The tendency for increased fodders was however neither uniform nor consistent. In Shahpur, by the 1920s, area under fodders was "gradually dininishing with the growing area under wheat, cotton and toria..... The fodder question is steadily becoming of pressing importance..."[30] Shahpur, it may be recalled, had a good number of cattle apart from the horse breeding grants on the Lower Jhelum Colony.

Fodder crops did not escape the price slump either. In Samundri, the substantial drop in fodder crops in both harvests, was seen to be in "consonance with the reduction in the number of cattle recorded in 1930 as compared to the enumeration of 1928"[31]. In Toba Tek Singh, fodder acreage was "quite small"[32]. Even so, the Janglis' preference for fodder remained; in Lyallpur tahsils fodder continued to occupy about 25% of the total cropped area in Jangli Chaks-

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28 O.D.A.R., 1922 p.220

29 A.R., Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.13

30 Ibid.

31 BEIP, PWS., 4, p.61

32 A.R. Samundri, op.cit., p.20

largely on account of their greater cattle wealth.[33] In any case by 1935, the position seemed to be improving.

SECTION 2: AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.

The relative security of agriculture which extension of canal irrigation granted to these lands, held out new options for the cultivators. Above all, it paved the way for agriculture to be carried on along more scientific lines, with the possibility of the peasant taking decisions from amongst a series of choices, thus holding promise of extension of rational decision-making. Whether this actually happened, of course, depended on a series of other factors.

That a greater element of option was added to decision-making can be seen in the context of the crop rotations and 'fallow' practices in the region. Canal irrigation added some more scientificity to the 'fallow' patterns, as compared to chāhi, barani or even sailāb cultivation - for on all these non-canal irrigated lands, 'fallow' resulted from compulsions of paucity of water resources, and were generally not a measure of possible cultivation in any year in addition to the recorded cultivated area; in the case of sailāb lands, all land could be under crop in a year of heavy inundation; higher rainfall, similarly, could lead to cultivation of larger portions of land at a given time. Meanwhile on well lands the area irrigated remained by and large fixed, hardly ever changing for

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33 A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.15.

the better except when supplemented by other forms of irrigation. In the light of this, perennial canal irrigation with a promised intensity of irrigation upto 70% of a holding which government claimed, offered to the cultivator greater freedom in cropping decisions.

The rotations followed reflected these differences. On barani lands two methods were common: a) dofasli dosālā, b) single-crop cultivation. The first involved cultivation of two crops in succession and then land being left fallow for the next two harvests, while the second entailed cultivation in the rabi for several years in succession and fallow in Kharif. The crops grown under this method were generally the rabi staples, gram and barley, followed by kharif fodders.[34]

On chāhi lands wheat gained importance and was grown singly or in combination with gram and barley to follow and be by a kharif fodder. It the land was strong, gram, barley or toria in rabi could follow wheat or, alternatively, cotton, alone or with senji as a fodder crop.[35]

Nahri rotations allowed for a greater variation of combinations, but generally showed a preponderance of wheat, cotton, toria and sugarcane. Lyallpur villages reported 10 such combinations, while Lahore also reported not less than 6.[36]

Rice was also grown in the kharif on nahri lands in Gujranwala, followed by a fallow in rabi, and rice again in

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34 BEIP PVS., 6, op.cit., p.22

35 Ibid.

36 BEIP PVS., 4, op.cit., p.31 & A.R., Lahore, op.cit.,p.13

kharif.[37] Sometimes rice was succeeded by wheat or senji in the rabi. Sugarcane was generally preceded by a fallow, to be followed, as a rule, by a year's fallow though sometimes it was grown after senji, following cotton.[38]

The necessity for following particular crop rotations was recognised by the cultivators, although not put into general practice. Thus in Multan it was found that even large holdings, served by inundation canals supplemented by wells, left "very little scope for any systematised rotation", because all rules for rotation were "apt to be obliterated if the following period of the canals is disturbed."[39] Here, dofasli dosālā was fairly common, while double cropping was limited, being at best confined to gram following rice and wheat, or turnips following early kharif fodders. Batai cultivation too was found contributing to, "a lower standard of cultivation and a fondness for less valuable crops involving less labour..."[40]

That social factors influenced cultivating methods no less than nature was accepted by the settlement Officer, Lahore district, who observed that,

> "rules for a scientific rotation of crops, which have been worked out on large farms, cannot possibly be applied to small holdings, and for the small man frequent crops with a comparatively low yield are of more use than occasional bumper crops interspersed with frequent fallows."[41]

It was also noticed that tenants could not be expected to

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37 BEIP PVS., 6, op.cit., p.22

38 Ibid.

39 BEIP PVS., 11, op.cit., p.50

40 Ibid., p.103

41 A.R., Lahore, op.cit., 1939, p.13.

experiment much with rotation since "the landlord is so frightened of the difficulty involved in dislodging old tenants that he changes their holdings much too frequently with the result that each tenant exhausts the land which he holds for the moments."[42] Nor was a landlord found to be exercising an "intelligent control over his tenant or insisting on the use of good seed, on improved methods of agriculture, or on an itelligent rotation of crops..."[43]

Sowing of cotton after wheat was so persistently followed by 'excellent' cultivators like Amritsar and Ludhiana Jat Sikhs and Jullunder Arains that it was finally accepted that "in practice it could not be deletrious," even though it involved "so much hard work and such heavy manuring during a comparatively short period that it can only suit expert and industrious cultivators".[44]

Apart from rotations, ploughing, manuring and following -"Wah, pahte sah"- were given special attention and other aspects, weeding, hoeing or watering too were given their due.[45] In fact, all the operations being interlinked, and all being further related to the nature of soil, rainfall, timing of operations, the crops being grown and so on, although

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42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit., p.16

45 BEIP PVS., 6, op. cit., p.62

a broad pattern of activity was evolved over the years, nevertheless, contingent factors influenced activity at each harvest. Ploughing of course, remained the most important, and the most tiring - the cultivators usually looking to the rains for the preliminary waterings necessary for ploughing. Multan agriculturists found that "rice and American cotton are exceptionally thirsty",[46] while in Lyallpur, officials found waterings given to wheat and cotton, particularly in the early stages, to be "excessive".[47] Explanations for this tendency of excessive waterings could, nevertheless be found - a) to help the fodder grown along with the crop and b) as a precautionary measure against canal closures, eg., at the end of December, when closures may last as long as 20 days.[48] While hard Kappar soils required the largest waterings, gas required the least, retli and Kallar came in between. It was also found that soft soils, which absorbed more water, took longer to irrigate, but retained moisture longer and could therefore withstand delay in irrigation longer than other soils.[49]

Section III : PRODUCTIVITY

Changes in cropping patterns, rotations and improved

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46 BEIP PVS., 11, op.cit., p.60

47 BEIP PVS., 4, op.cit., p.36

48 Ibid.

49 BEIP PVS., 11, op.cit., p.60

methods of cultivation were all aimed at achieving better results and higher returns from cultivation, together with rationalizing the time spent in these operations. While for the cultivator both aspects were important, government in this period lay particular stress on the former. The zest with which higher-yielding varieties were propagated by official machinery was a step in this direction. In the Punjab the years preceding the first world war saw sustained efforts in this direction.[50] Needless to say, the crops which invited special attention were wheat and cotton, which formed a crucial link between imperial needs and Punjab's place in the agrarian colony pattern. Beginning with the second decade of the twentieth century, the operations of the Department of agriculture comprised of supply of high-yielding seed varieties to peasants wherever possible. The Department's reports furnished annual returns on the success of these efforts.

Thus in the case of wheat two varieties were pushed:[51]

	Year officially introduced	Area in Acres in 1928	1934
Punjab 11	1913	467,220	N.A.
Punjab 8-A	1919	1,276,450	2,805,116

These figures are provincial-level, but the further break-up available, partial though it is, indicates that while

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50 See I, Agnihotri, 1977, op.cit.

51 BEIP., Pub.49, p.6

Amritsar and Jullunder had 42,208 and 155,489 acres respectively under Punjab 8-A, Montgomery and Lyallpur returned 301,334 and 231,800 acres respectively under this variety.[52] Further investigations revealed that of the total wheat area in Lyallpur, 37.8% and 33.7% were under the 8-A and Punjab-11 varieties respectively.[53]

In the case of cotton, the following figures for spread of American cotton are revealing :-

TABLE 4.4

Area under 4-F Cotton (In Acres) :

COLONY	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919
L. Chenab Colony	6,000	30,000	120,000	190,000	200,000
L. Jhelum Colony	1,200	7,000	11,500	16,000	60,000
L. Bari Daab Colony	500	13,000	80,000	173,000	235,000
U. Jhelum Colony	-	-	-	1,000	6,000
Chunian Colony	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
TOTAL:	7,700	50,000	215,000	401,000	511,000

Source : ODAP, relevant years.

52 Ibid., p.8

53. BEIP., Pub.38, p.9

By 1925, the report on the Land Revenue Administration was commenting on the high cotton acreage, which even broke records for the post-war boom year of 1919-20. The reason for extensive sowings, it said, " appears to be the high price of cotton in the preceding years, combined with favourable climatic conditions". Cotton, "now stands definitely as the most important crop in the province after wheat".[54]

Did these shifts in acreage under high-yielding varieties achieve the desired objectives, of higher yields?

Innovations and the question of productivity of land, and shall not go into greater details here. For the present we may make note of two observations in this regard:-

Firstly, vis-a-vis unirrigated land, yields on irrigated land were definitely higher, for all crops, and all districts of Punjab. Thus extension of irrigation, and more so, the extension of agriculture to largely uncultivated land undoubtedly led to increase in total output and value of output of the concerned districts and of Punjab province as whole. In the Colony districts yields were also definitely favourable as compared to the period before the advent of canal irrigation, and also as compared to the barren tracts of the older districts. (see Table 4.5)

It is true that Punjab returned higher yields as compared to yield figures for British India. Cotton yields in Punjab

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54 LRARP, 1925, p.4

TABLE: 4.5

AVERAGE YIELD PER ACRE - PUNJAB

(in lbs.)

YEAR	WHEAT			COTTON			JWAR		
	Irri.	Unirri.	Both	Irri.	Unirri.	Both	Irri.	Unirri.	Both
1911-12	898	555	726	126	95	118	480	361	406
1916-17	964	606	791	143	104	135	541	449	470
1921-22	1020	640	856	144	105	138	545	402	434
1926-27	997	576	795	(b) 133 (c) 146	(b) 104 (c) 81	(b) 130 (c) 146	514	392	417
1931-32	967	572	791	(b) 126 (c) 130	(b) 97 (c) 72	(b) 123 (c) 130	506	352	385

	SUGARCANE			MAIZE			RAPE & MUSTARD		
	Irri.	Unirri.	Both	Irri.	Unirri.	Both	Irri.	Unirri.	Both
1911-12	1743	1467	1686	1112	766	908	498	330	396
1916-17	2038	1520	1933	1324	822	1040	540	339	429
1921-22	2344	1669	2191	1261	745	962	550	354	440
1926-27	2045	1533	1953	1187	720	916	532	338	435
1931-32	2046	1470	1951	1177	760	951	518	341	428

Source: Quinquennial Report on the Average Yield per Acre of Principal Crops in India. Delhi, 1935



were definitely higher while in the case of wheat Punjab kept pace with United Provinces.[55] Others too have argued that expansion in wheat and cotton area in Punjab was related to extension of irrigation and, rise in yield per acre.[56] A more recent study of agricultural growth in Punjab and Bombay has reiterated that "the spread of irrigation must undoubtedly have increased the yield per acre, especially of the most important rabi crop, wheat"[57]

Unfortunately, yield figures for the colony regions are not available separately and all observations have to be based on general canal-irrigated land as a category. To the extent that yields on irrigated and non-irrigated lands in Punjab showed a marked difference, Mishra's conclusion, as also of others is correct. But as Mishra himself notes:

> "Public investment in canal irrigation produced a once only upward shift of some hypothetical production function - affecting the height of the output even more than its slope..."[58]

In fact the following points emerge from Tables 4.6 and 4.7 below.

Firstly even on the selected farms, which were by no means representative of the average farm in the Canal regions, only American cotton, sugarcane and gram returned yields even slightly above the Central Punjab averages for irrigated lands. In fact, there was not much difference on this count between the intensively cultivated irrigated tracts of central Punjab

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55 Blyn, G, 1966, Appendix, Table 3A, pp.258 and 288

56 Dharm Narain, 1965., pp.55 and 147

57 Mishra, S.C., 1982, p.27

58 Mishra, S.C., 1981, p.198

TABLE 4.6

AVERAGE YIELDS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF PUNJAB

(in maunds per acre)

CROP	AVERAGE FOR COLONIES			RISALEWALA GOVERNMENT FARM		
	1940-41	41-42	42-43	1940-41	41-42	42-43
COTTON DESI	10.43	11.51	6.77	14.27	15.91	13.88
COTTON AMERICAN	7.82	10.75	11.97	15.42	13.96	15.25
WHEAT-GRAIN	16.77	19.80	19.99	16.02	22.85	25.58
WHEAT-BHUSA	22.53	25.10	28.18	18.96	38.84	32.00
TORIA	4.58	7.14	5.45	5.54	8.13	7.55
GRAM	6.94	10.96	16.69	9.45	13.39	17.95
MAIZE	25.22	22.37	13.11	-	-	-
SUGARCANE (Gur)	38.63	47.56	52.30	30.62	85.08	39.27

	AVERAGE FOR CENTRAL PUNJAB			AVERAGE FOR ALL OLDER DISTRICTS		
COTTON-DESI	11.79	10.51	8.34	8.99	9.46	7.15
COTTON AMERICAN	6.28	5.33	16.25	6.27	4.67	6.24
WHEAT-GRAIN	17.83	13.84	14.66	15.13	14.42	14.93
WHEAT-BHUSA	29.27	24.05	21.03	23.44	23.42	20.65
TORIA	8.18	5.00	12.55	8.18	4.51	12.55
GRAM	3.60	5.66	7.89	5.42	3.86	2.37
MAIZE	19.40	21.11	17.85	17.30	18.88	15.84
SUGARCANE (Gur)	31.93	21.28	28.64	22.30	21.01	24.70

Source: B.E.I.P. Farm accounts of the Punjab, 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43.

TABLE 4.7

AVERAGE YIELDS IN THE COLONIES (1927-32) AND (1933-1940) (In maunds per Acre)

CROP	1927-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	Average for 5 years
COTTON	9-35- 6	5- 9-0	10-13- 0	9- 7- 3	5-23- 8	7-37-15
WHEAT	13-32- 2	22-22-1	21-39- 1	20-17-12	17- 2-13	13- 3- 8
TORIA	5-28-00	5- 4-8	8-35-10	7- 3- 7	8-24- 2	7- 6- 2
GRAM	9- 7-14	14- 1-4	15-28- 7	7-27-14	9-36- 9	10-38- 7
SUGARCANE (Gur)	41-25- 0	66- 5-5	50-24- 2	52-23-11	50-32- 3	50-10- 1

	1935-36	36-37	37-38	38-39	39-40	
COTTON DESI	11.70	7.56	10.46	8.23	8.29	9.32
COTTON AMERICAN	16.72	8.78	11.02	6.95	6.52	9.31
WHEAT-GRAIN	20.79	17.34	18.74	17.53	19.18	18.72
TORIA	6.71	6.79	11.69	8.41	10.12	8.58
GRAM	9.76	9.68	8.77	9.59	7.93	9.02
SUGARCANE (Gur)	53.66	54.38	65.09	-	98.40	61.07

Source : 1) B.E.I.P., Pub. 33, 1934

2) Cost of Production of Crops on a Canal Irrigated estate in the Punjab, B.E.I.P., Pub. 83, 1944

and the Colony lands. Further, guinquennial averages for Punjab for a period of twenty years, do not show a marked rise in yield per acre for most crops.

In the evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture while conflicting reports came in regarding trends in yields, few reported an actual increase in productivity over the years; while most of those appearing before the Commission, officials or otherwise, expressed apprehensions about decline in productivity.[59]

Impact on Peasant's life:

> Having briefly examined the impact of shifts in cropping with regard to yields, we turn to another question, viz., what impact did all these changes have on peasant activity in terms of his day-to-day work, pattern of living and social interaction?

In their reports, British officers noted the change that was coming about. Inevitably they saw it in the context of the White Man's Burden syndrome, with its eyes set on the great Civilising mission. Thus early settlement reports made it a point to comment on the leisurely pace of life in these districts before canal irrigation set in. There were references to the inhabitants being "averse to manual labour and inclined on slight temptation to return to their old predatory habits".[60] More than anything else, the canal seemed to have changed all that. In their view, it had done more to civilise them and make them look to honest labour for their living than 45 years of settled government"[61].

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59 R.C.A., 1927 op.cit.

60 S.R. Gujranwala, 1906, p.4

61 Ibid.

As Canal irrigation spread, the residents came to be caught into the fold of sedantary agriculture and its numerous operations. While the year saw two peak seasons - Baisakh to Jeth (mid-April to mid-June) and Katak to Poh (mid-October to mid-January) it was not as if the rest of the months passed in leisure for there were many jobs which demanded the cultivator's time and attention. Day in and day out, the cattle had to be watered and fed, fodder collected and chopped; implements and tools to be attended to - sharpened and repaired - which called for visits to the village artisan, the water courses had to be cleared - the internal ones once after every 2nd watering, the main one once in three months - cane-crushing required his attention, or manure had to be carted to the field; once every 2-3 weeks the cultivator took his grain to the mill and drove his bullocks while it was being ground. In January-February cotton sticks had to be gathered, and the field cleared: In December after sowing of wheat, houses and cattle byres underwent annual repairs and also had to be replastered with mud. Produce had to be carted to the market at times and purchases of household requirements were to be made. In the slack period many plied carts for hire to carry produce from the village or surrounding villages to the market. Religious, social calls had to be made..... this then was a sort of annual calendar[62].

There were however, variations in this pattern - Thus while Lyallpur peasants tended to be 'busy', in Gajju chak it

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62 BEIP., P.V.S., 4, op.cit., p.14

was found that cultivation was 'slack'.[63] Here the cultivator was usually found doing "nothing aside from cultivation", spending a major portion of his spare time in "resting, smoking, gossiping, visiting friends and relatives and in such pastimes as cock-fighting".[64] Here infact even when faced with a gloomy outlook, "he simply waits for a better future", and may at best, "devote more care to preparation for the next harvest."[65] In Multan the pattern seemed closer to Lyallpur, and there was a "more or less even distribution of work throughout the year as against periods of heavy and light work in the Central Punjab", with a slightly greater concentration in the 2 months, Asoj and Katak" (mid-September to mid-November)" which saw the reaping of the kharif and sowing of the Rabi harvests.[66] But even here the pattern was not uniform. For instance peasants in Mailsi, which had not benefitted as extensively from canal irrigation as other parts of Multan district had, in official opinion, " not yet emerged entirely from the pastoral stage", for they cared more for their cattle than for remunerative crops.[67] This no doubt, was in sharp contrast from the

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63 BEIP, P.V.S., 6, op.cit., p. 1

64 Ibid., p. vi

65 Ibid.

66 BEIP, P.V.S., 11, op.cit., p. 58

67 A.R., Mailsi., 1920, p. 25

Lyallpur villages where "agriculture was almost entirely of a commercial type".[68] While in Lyallpur villages canal irrigation prompted a greater intensity of labour on the farm, in Multan, peasants in those track which were yet to reap the benefit of canal irrigation found themselves spending a greater part of their time in ensuring water supply to their holding, given little or no rainfall.

Section : IV : TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

On one count there can be neither any doubt, nor a difference of opinion, and that is the tremendous fillip that trade and commerce received in Western Punjab with the advent of canal irrigation. The rise in commercial activity in the region was directly linked to the scale of agriculture and the cropping pattern that developed. The predominant position of wheat and cotton in crop acreages and the trade figures for this period, although not specific to the Colonies, reveal that both the value of the produce sold as well as volume of trade went up remarkably during this period. This was true of trade with other districts of Punjab and other states within India on the one hand, as well as external trade involving export of produce to other countries, via Karachi. The commercial development of the Colony districts, and their integration with the world market, as well as the internal market,

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68. Ibid.

both, in Punjab and outside Punjab, depended not the least on the course of development of railways and communications. Within Punjab closely linked to this was the growth of markets and market towns. The period beginning the mid-1890s, saw considerable progress in this direction, (see Maps) as well as a change in the perspective on railway and communication development.

Whereas the railways came to Punjab as early as the 1860s when Lahore was put on the railway map of India, it was the 1890s which saw more discussion and undertaking of railway lines being laid out. This was closely linked to the state's need to undertake famine relief works on the one hand, and to open up grain-producing tracts and linking them with tracts liable to failure. In official terminology, the focus at this time was on "protective railways." However, the definition of 'protective railway' was open to debate. For it did not seem correct, nor necessary, to exclude altogether from consideration railways which were protective only in the sense that they transported grain from producing tracts to a convenient centre for distribution to tracts exposed to scarcity, since the collection of grain must precede its distribution.[69] The proceedings of the Famine Branch of DRA for the next decade or so are replete with discussion related to construction of railway lines as part of famine relief work in these years

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69 Cf., Rev Agri. Fam., 1890 to 1900, A and B Pros.

which proved to be some of the worst for the insecure, famine-prone tracts of Punjab.

The British government was keen to point out that when they took over Punjab, "there were then no communications worthy of the name; we now have 1,500 miles of metalled and 23,000 of unmetalled roads, and have spent 19 millions sterling on Railways. In those days the 'badness and insecurity of the roads and the levy of vaxatious transit and customs dues prevented exportation of grain to any distance' and the people of one district starved for want of food while plenty reigned in parts of the province not very far distant; there is now no import duty save on salt, and that taken on only a single line along our Western frontier..... Above all, we have replaced murder and violence by peace and order, and the traveller now sings with full pockets for the robber is in gaol;----"[70]

However nothing could be more erroneous than to conclude on the basis of the above that before advent of the British, Punjab was cut off from the rest of the world, and that trade, commerce and safe travel were the gift of imperialism to the Province. We have only to look at the numerous travelogues, the history of the development of trade routes, the nature of pre-capitalist trade and markets the history of towns in the Punjab and the numerous texts on Punjab itself to know that the above passage was a gross exaggeration and misrepresentation of the truth, if not totally baseless.[71] There was however, truth in the claim that colonial rule facilitated

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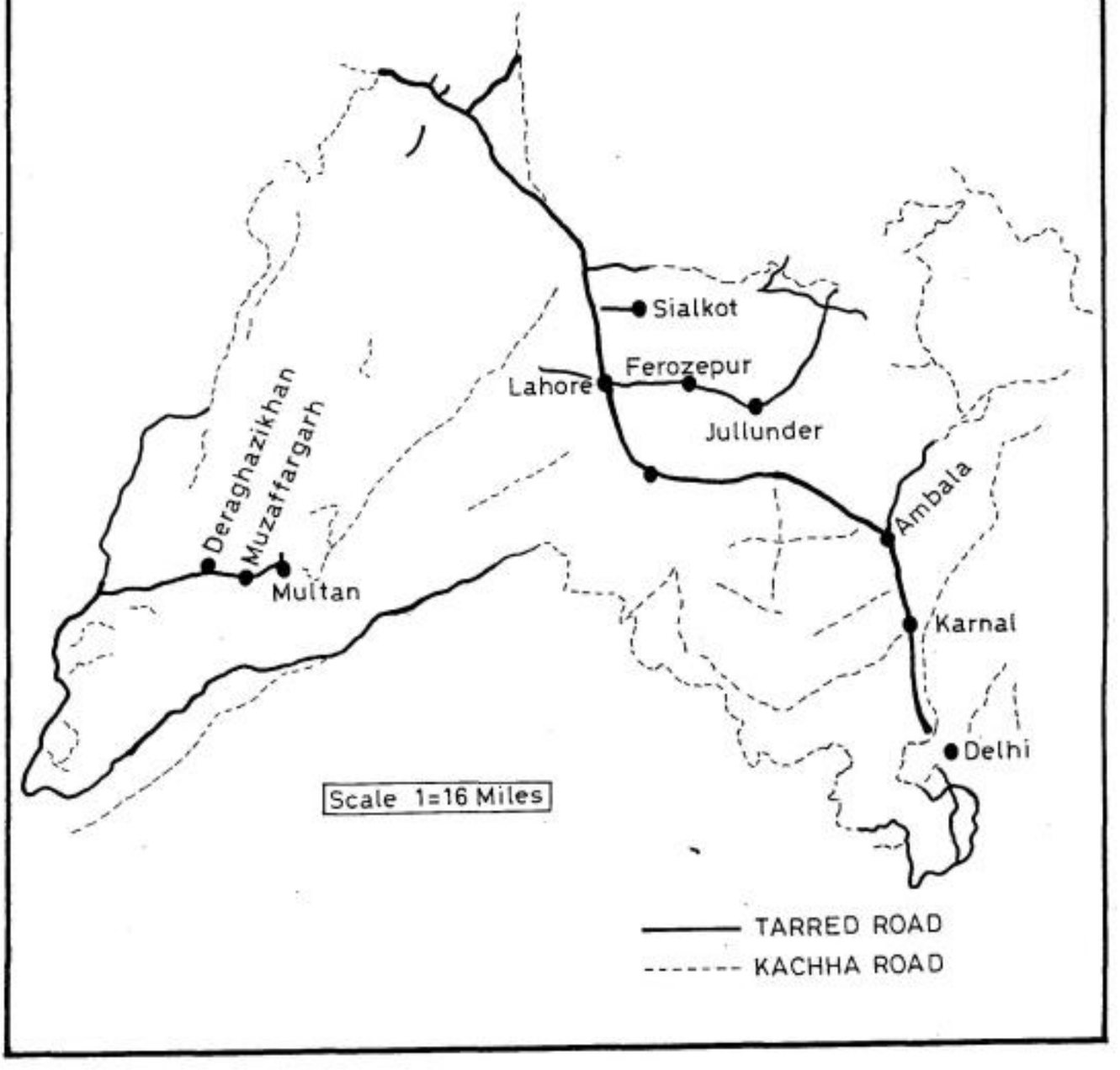
70 Census Punjab Report, 1881, p. 53

71 cf. Ross, D., 1883, Passim.

trade, and in so far as it developed modern communications, it definitely speeded up the pace of commerce, and ushered in an era of a totally new scale of commercial activity. More so, it shifted the focus from the previous trade with Central Asia, over land, to overseas trade, with Europe and England, to be more specific, taking the prime place in this whole process. The nature of trade, the commodities exchanged, the pattern of exchange, all underwent change under colonial rule. The commercial map of Punjab definitely underwent drastic changes - and in this, Western Punjab, sparsely populated till the 1890s, largely uncultivated and consequently not in the forefront of commerce in the Punjab, was the scene of perhaps the most remarkable changes. This change was certainly not in the form of uniform, linear progress. On the contrary, it was a more complex phenomenon, spelling ruin for many towns which enjoyed pride of place in the old set up, adversely affecting lands which did not fall on the railway-line or along the road to the closest market; finishing off the river-borne traffic of a region or a district by the opening of a new extension of a canal which immediately led to diminished water supply elsewhere. These were all processes which at times the Gazetteers and early settlement reports were compelled to take note of though they were certainly not the highlights when the saga of British rule in the Punjab was to be sung aloud. A later census recorded..." the decaying towns of Kot Kamalia, Dipalpur, Gugera and Shahpur, ceased to be important

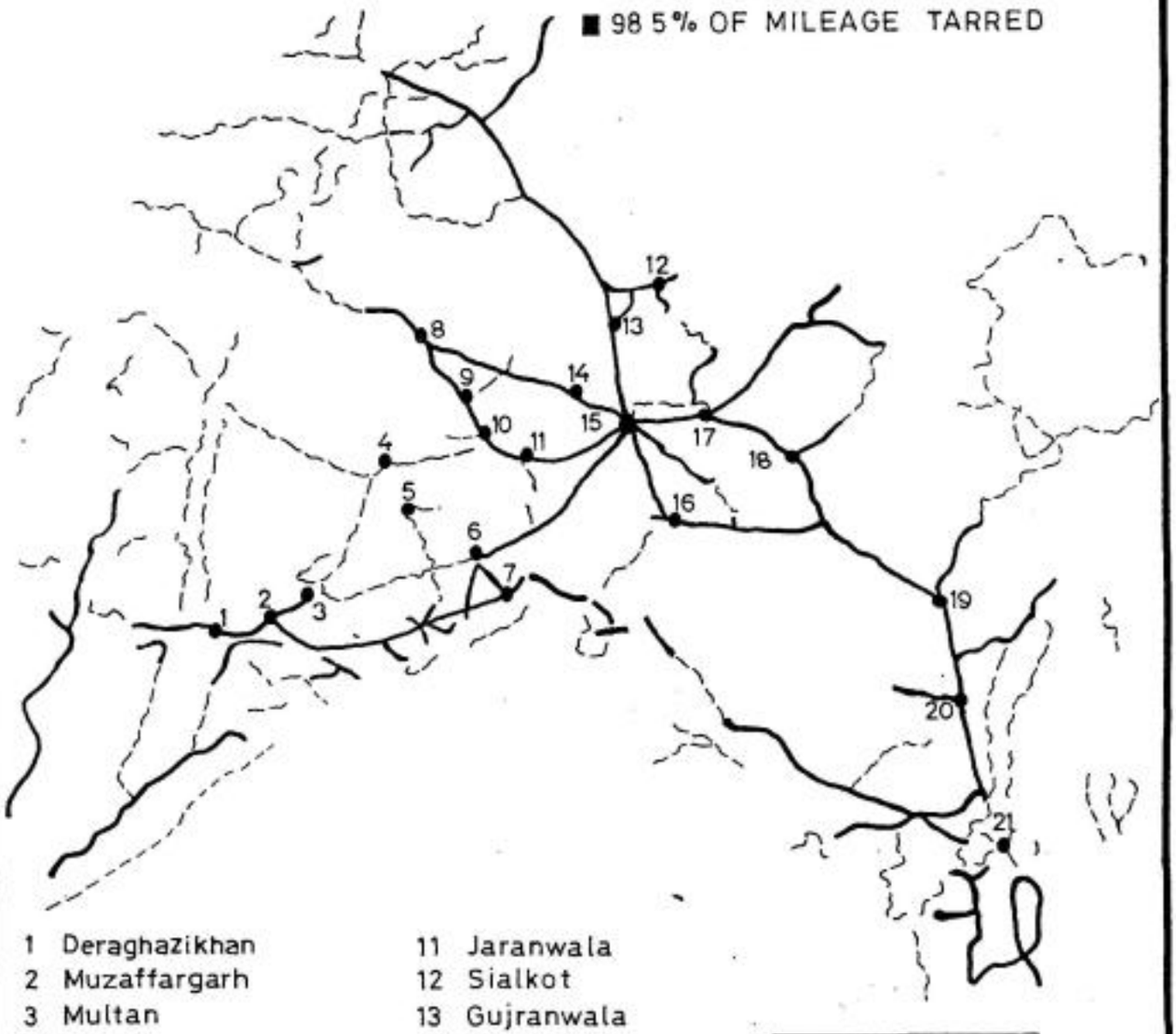
PUNJAB
P.W.D. Metalled Road in 1921

ONLY SIX MILES TARRED EXPENDITURE 18·75 LAKHS ON 1158 MILES



PUNJAB ROADS MAINTAINED BY P.W.D. IN 1937

- MILEAGE INCREASE $2\frac{1}{2}$ TIMES SINCE 1921
- EXPENDITURE ON MAINTENANCE NOT LESS THAN DOUBLED
- 98 5% OF MILEAGE TARRED



1 Deraghazikhan
2 Muzaffargarh
3 Multan
4 Jhang
5 Toba Tek Singh
6 Montgomery
7 Pakpattan
8 Sargodha
9 Chinot
10 Lyallpur
11 Jaranwala
12 Sialkot
13 Gujranwala
14 Shekhupur
15 Lahore
16 Ferozepur
17 Amritsar
18 Jullunder
19 Ambala
20 Karnal
21 Delhi

Scale 1= 16 Miles

——— TARRED ROAD
------- KACHHA ROAD

because of many of their inhabitants having moved to the Colony towns such as Lyallpur, Sargodha, Montgomery, Okara, Gojra etcetera..."[72] The growth of Lyallpur and Gujnanwala was remarkable, while the rise of Karachi as the chief port in the export trade for wheat, and cotton was significant not only with reference to Punjab, but for the rest of the country as well. There were atleast 14 new towns which also served as grain markets - all lay on railway lines.

Even so, development was not uniformly spread out over time or for that matter, regions. While the extension of railway lines succeeded in linking up the major district towns with the main export outlet, Karachi, within the districts, transport and communication did not develop till the 1920s. The metalled road mileage remained fairly stationary from 1893 till about 1913. Only around the world war I period did road mileage go up. Maps 1 and 2 show that in fact these changes came about only between 1921-1937. Uptil then large parts of colony districts remained cut off, and even faced adversity on account of decline of previous modes of communication. Jhang district, for instance, remained practically cut off from the outside world, except by river and even the river service "greatly decayed" on account of diminishing cold weather supply of water in both Chenab and Jhelum rivers. Thus while water-borne traffic was effectually put to an end, the nearest railway

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72 Census Punjab Report, 1931, p-91

station, Chinchawatni remained 56 miles away from the main town, Jhang, Matters improved with the opening of the Jech-Doab railway but only slightly since the condition of roads was not satisfactory enough to provide suitable access to the new railway stations. Within the district, camels and donkeys formed the chief means of transport. Montgomery while on the one hand fortunate enough to have the Lahore-Karachi branch of the North-Western railway run along the ridge in the district and 8 stations in the district, was at the same time not at all advanced with regard to road transport. With all the roads of the district being unmetalled, even the Ravi, when in full flood, "greatly hampered communication between the tracts on the two sides of the river".[73]

In Gujranwala thangs improved in the early 1900s. In the 1880s, the nearest point was 25 miles away from the railway line and the farthest 70 miles, while district roads being in bad shape were nearly impassable for wheeled traffic.[74] By 1906 however, the roads had improved and no point of this tract was more than 20 miles away from the railway line. By the second decade, there were many markets, mandis and much trade in the district - at Akalgarh, Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Nankan and Warburton Also, the roads between Shahdara and Sharkpur and Gujranwala and Hafizabad were metalled.

Multan, exceptionally well off in the matter of railway communications - connected with Lahore since 1865, with Karachi

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73 S.R.. Montgomery, 1899, p.24

74 S.R., Gujranwala, 1906, op.cit, p.3.

TABLE : 4.8

Rail, Road and Canal Mileage in Punjab. 1872-73 to 1932-33

Year	Railway Mileage	Canal Mileage	Miles of Metalled Road
1872 - 73	410	2,744	1,036
1882 - 83	600	4,583	1,467
1892 - 93	1,725	12,368	2,142
1902 - 03	-	16,893	-
1912 - 13	4,000	16,935	2,164
1922 - 23	4,441	19,664	2,938
1932 - 33	5,500	19,601	3,904

Source: Calvert, 1922, op.cit., p.107

since 1889 and with Wazirabad since 1900 - lagged benind in the field of road transport. The settlement Officer remarked that local facilities, for important economic operations of exchange and distribution within the district were "decidedly deficient" even as late as the 1920s.[75] Road transport in terms of wheeled carriage remained practically unknown, and camels, bullocks, ponies and donkeys formed the means of transport. Railways, however, continued to expand and by the end of the first decade, through connections were available

75 A.R., Mailsi, Multan, Sept 1920, op.cit., p. 1065

between Khanewal and Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal-Wazirabad, Khanewal-Lodhran, Shahdara-Sangla, and Chichoke-Mallian and Shorket. While Khanewal prospered, the fortunes of Sarai Sidhu which now lay off trade routes, declined.[76]

Shahpur nevertheless, remained far behind, with things being worse in the non-canal colony tracts of the district. As late as 1915, metalled roads were unknown in Khushab tahsil even though Khushab was the chief market town. In the Salt Range, roads were stony and uneven, all transport other than railway being done by camels and donkeys, while even this became difficult during the rains. Guniyal, Mitha Tiwana and Hadali formed important links between the railway and the Thal. While Girot lost even the little importance it once possessed. Parts of the Jhelum and Ara Circles meanwhile, benefitted with the opening of the Jech Doab railway line and the construction of roads and mandis in the Colony area.[77]

As can be seen from the accompanying maps, internal roadways communication showed signs of improvement only from the mid-1920s onwards. Road mileage all told, as well as mileage of tarred roads and expenditure by the Public Works Department went up considerably as compared to previous years. While on the one hand this would have helped commercial activity, especially in the Western region which benefitted most at this time, the influence of this expansion was neither very

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76 S.R., Multan, 1901, op.cit. p.13

77 A.R., Khushab, 1915, op.cit., pp. 8-9

remarkable, nor spread over all districts.

Lyallpur district, for instance, was on the whole a major beneficiary of communications development. But even here Lyallpur tahsil gained more than the other tahsils in the district. There were many metalled roads connecting different parts of the tahsil with Chak Jhumra and Lyallpur mandis, as well as a regular network of well-maintained Kachchā roads. Rakh Branch Circle in the Lower Chenab Canal Colony offering an exception of a different kind for, here, "every man has a road to his own holding."[78] But Samundri, in the same district, was less fortunate with regard to both markets and roads. Except in the northern portion, there were no metalled roads at all, and all mandis were at considerable distance by Kachchā roads.[79] Garh, a big proprietary Village, which serced as a mandi for nearby villages, was, to give an example, at a distance of 20 miles from Tandlianwala, 33 miles from Okara and 44 miles from Lyallpur. Meanwhile, Toba Tek Singh Circle in the same district, was the least favoured part of the district. The only paccā road here - an 8 mile extension of the Gojra - Tandlianwala road upto Mehdiabad - was built by persistent effort on the part of Sir Syed Mahdi Shah himself.[80] For the rest the entire circle depended on kachchā roads. Gojra, in the north, was the only flourishing mandi, so that peasants in the southern part of the tahsil faced serious problems in marketing and transportation, with hardly any activity going on in Toba Tek Singh town itself.[81]

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78 A.R., Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit., para. 3

79 A.R., Samundri, 1936, p.39

80 A.R. Toba Tek Singh, 1937, p.7

81 Ibid.

The village surveys narrated similar difficulties with regard to bad roads and transportation. Since internal roads were by and large kachcha roads, considerable problems were faced in transportation of produce after the rains. To cite another instance, in Mailsi tahsil, several dealers were unable to move large purchases of grain for some months in 1919 - 1920, owing to difficulty in obtaining camels.[82] In this regard, Lahore district and Lahore tahsil specifically was better off. With communications more developed than in any other part of Punjab, few villages lay at a distance of more than 5 or 6 miles from a metalled road, while those located on the main road, fairly close to Lahore, were at a greater advantage, and made considerable amount from sale of fodder, vegetables and milk.[83] Chunian tahsil and Colony, were similarly well off in this respect.

✓ To sum up, the following points emerge from the above discussion: railway communications developed at a steady pace from 1900 onwards in the Colony districts of Western Punjab. Most districts established rail connections with Karachi and Lahore; this greatly facilitated trade and commerce in the region on the whole, but especially contributed to the emergence of Karachi as a major port handling the bulk of agricultural export from this region. This development took place with full awareness on the part of GOI, and the proceedings of the commerce and trade branch, in the years preceding

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82 A.R., Mailsi, 1920, op.cit.

83 A.R., Lahore, 1939, pp.3-4

World War-I amply bear this out. In the correspondence exchanged between the Secretary of State for India and the Railway Department, GOI, measures to be taken to improve railway communication between Karachi and district markets in the Punjab, as well as between Karachi and the United Provinces and Delhi, were discussed in considerable detail.[84] These steps were obviously taken with a view to facilitating the wheat and cotton export trade, which was of primary concern to England. A Second aspect, which emerges from the discussion above, is that internal road transport, though expanded in the 1920s and 1930s (with a brief half during the depression years) did not really keep pace with railway expansion or even with the rapid commercial advance of this region. Consequently, while movement of produce from mandis to Karachi was made easy due to state enterprise and effort, transport of produce from the village to the mandi continued to face tremendous hurdles, the brunt of which was, needless to say, borne by the cultivator himself. The second aspect of the problem was not unknown to GOI. Nevertheless, its attention was at the moment focussed on Karachi, where it was felt that "facilities for carrying this newly developed traffic are most inadequate".[85] Various representations to this point had already been received by the Secretary of State and the Karachi Chamber of Commerce too was seized of the matter. This was not surprising either as the export figures below amply bear out.

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84 Comm. Ind., Comm Trade, June 1914, B Pro 1, F-67

TABLE 4.9

Wheat exports in 1000 tons:

Years	Calcutta/Bengal	Bombay	Sind/Karachi
1870-71 to 1874-75	14	13	-
1875-76 to 1879-80	122	37	17
1880-81 to 1884-85	252	396	134
1885-86 to 1889-90	200	476	206
1890-91 to 1894-95	107	346	334
1895-96 to 1899-1900	73	158	235
1900-01 to 1904-05	169	101	419
1905-06 to 1909-10	85	72	648
1910-11 to 1914-15	112	145	983
1915-16 to 1919-20	42	85	541
1920-21 to 1924-25	2	11	150
1930-31 to 1934-35	-	1	45

Source: Report on the Marketing of Wheat. 1937.

Section V: External Trade and Intra-Regional Trade

It may be mentioned here that the export trade was not a new feature as far as the economy was concerned. Ever since the 1870s, Punjab had been a net exporter of large quantities of foodgrains. These exports had been directed to the ports as well as to other ports of India. In the late 1890s, the famine branch of DRA assessed that Punjab was exporting a net average of 5,00,000 tons of wheat. The figure continued to rise steadily, and within this, export through Karachi rose rapidly; the importance that Karachi came to acquire may be deduced from the fact that from the 1900s onwards, an average pf 65% tp 70% pf the entire wheat export

from India was shipped from Karachi.

This should not be taken to mean that no wheat was entering the internal market. In fact, as an enquiry into the marketing of wheat revealed over the years the internal demand for wheat was going up. The increasing demand, both internal and external, was met by increased output. Unfortunately, separate figures for trade between Punjab and other states, or within Punjab between different districts are not available. Table 4.16below gives certain interesting details however which point to the nature of trade networks developing within Punjab. From the figures it is clear that cotton and wheat showed the maximum rise in quantity of output entering the market at all. These two crops also recorded the highest percentage of crop going to the port, although by 1921-22 a shift had taken place in the case of wheat. More wheat was entering the internal market, while cotton maintained a steady export figure. The proportion of cotton crop entering the port from the area lying between the Sutlej and the Jhelum, which included the Canal Colonies as well as a few other districts, was the highest, and continued to increase over the years, wheat also entered the port from this region in a large proportion, but the year 1921-22 recorded a slight fall as compared to 1904-05. This was probably because the trade was yet to pick up momentum after the restrictions of the wheat scheme during the war years.

However, it needs to be pointed out that while Punjab Province, on the whole, managed to strike a balance between

TABLE 4.10 ✓

INTERNAL TRADE BETWEEN ZONES AND PORTS IN PUNJAB
1893-4 TO 1921-2

	(1)	(2)		(3)			
	Provincial total quantity in '000 mans	% of (1) to		Share of different trade blocks in the trade (% of (1)			
		Port	Internal	Delhi City	Rest of Cis-Sutlej	Between Sutlej & Jhelum	Trans-Jhelum
Cotton:							
1893-4	386	91	9	14	28	51	7
1904-5	1657	94	6	5	49	45	1
1921-2	2586	92	8	-	22	77	1
Oilseeds:							
1893-4	5092	-	-	16	63	14	7
1904-5	3140	-	-	7	50	41	2
1921-2	3783	-	-	2	7	90	-
Wheat:							
1893-4	6469	85	15	6	47	39	8
1904-5	31180	99	1	1	28	66	4
1921-2	5409	48	52	1	26	61	12
Gram and Pulses:							
1893-4	3562	50	50	8	91	1	-
1904-5	5387	34	66	2	92	4	2
1921-2	2210	33	67	2	91	2	4
Jowar and Bajra:							
1893-4	1617	13	87	2	96	1	1
1904-5	2114	29	71	-	95	4	-
1921-2	218	29	70	8	75	3	-

Source : RITPRR, relevant years.

internal demand and international demand, within the Punjab the pattern that emerged was more in the nature of a regional division rather than an even distribution of the dual demand. Western Punjab, as a zone, was therefore catering more to the international market, with Lyallpur as the Center.

The pattern of trade between Punjab and other regions was, however, greatly dependent on conditions outside Punjab. Thus a bad crop in U.P. would result in its drawing upon food from Punjab.

This happened on several occasions earlier but was more marked during the Depression. This led some to believe that internal demand was increasing, while exports were declining. While there is not sufficient evidence to support this, one may hazard an explanation, that in periods such as during the war when exports were restricted, and the Depression, when the price slump affected trade, an attempt was made to channelise produce from Western Punjab districts to other parts of India, a process which was already sufficiently advanced as far as Central Punjab was concerned. Thus in times of some form of crisis West Punjab's economy too moved in the direction of closer integration with the country's market network since dependence on an external market alone contributed to more severe economic dislocation.

The 20th century, in a sense, saw various levels of development in the region. Consequent upon commercialisation and specialisation in agriculture, two simultaneous phenomenon

can be traced. One was the formation of the'market', in the context of an internal market, and Secondly, the integration of the market in Punjab with the world market. The two did not necessarily follow the same lines or the same pattern; nor was the pattern uniformly spread over the Province. One may even hazard a regional division - with Central/Eastern Punjab being closely integrated with the internal market, while Western Punjab was definitely closely integrated with the world market, through a preponderance of export-oriented growth in the region. Trade and price figures for this period show that over the years Lyallpur, in the Canal Colonies, took the place of Amritsar as the premier export market of the Province; the same trend was reflected in the degree of correlation of prices in Britain and the different districts of Punjab. An enquiry into the marketing of wheat considered the wheat prices at Karachi to be the best index of India export values for the purpose of comparing Indian and world prices.[86]

Further, within the markets of Punjab there was closer relation between Karachi - Lyallpur, and Lyallpur-Okara; Okara-Amritsar, Karachi-Okara and Lyallpur-Amritsar coming next, with the correlation between Karachi-Amritsar being the lowest.[87]

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86 Enquiry into Marketing of Wheat, 1937, p.75

87 BEIP., Pub 49, p.64

TABLE 4.11

Coefficient of Gross Correlation Between Markets

Correlation Between	Coefficient of Gro: Correlation
Karachi and Lyallpur	+ 0.82
Karachi and Okara	+ 0.66
Karachi and Amritsar	+ 0.43
Lyallpur and Okara	+ 0.86
Okara and Amritsar	+ 0.71
Lyallpur and Amritsar	+ 0.61

Source: BEIP, Pub 49, p.66

It may be argued that while the Lyallpur price reflected the price in the highest correlation zone that of Amritsar repre- sented the price in the low-correlation zone. The prices in different markets however, did not exist in isolation of eac other; with better communication and market facilities, and there was in fact, greater commercial activity, a tendency f the price in one region to get transmitted to another, resul in a sharp fall in co-efficient of price variation across th different districts of Punjab. In a recent study it has bee pointed out that while in the early years of annexation, the 1860s, there existed a complicated maze of price zones, corr ponding to the fragmentation and isolation of the internal

markets, over the decades, the price variation in different regions became considerably less, while in the case of one commodity, wheat, by the 2nd decade, it had become marginal, resulting in the whole of Punjab being absorbed within one price zone.[88]

At the same time there was, in the long run, closer correspondence between the mandi price and the producer's price since village prices could not be totally isolated from the mandi price. However, the fluctuation in mandi price being greater, the gap between the two tended to increase whenever the mandi price went up, indicating a lag between price-rise, and its impact on the producer. However, over the years, both tended to move in the same direction. The wheat enquiry noted that while in other regions of Punjab there was a noticeable difference between the official and trade price, in Lyallpur the two prices were more in sympathy with each other.[89] While emphasising the correlation between the overseas price and the internal price, one must not overlook other factors which affected the process of price-formation. These related to pressures within the economy, both, long-term and short-term. Thus factors such as rain, or other climatic influences affected harvests and were sometimes responsible for shortfalls in certain tracts, affected harvest prices, the nature of development of export and import trade, as well as demand overtime, communications, level of integration, nature of growth of markets, all

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88. Cf. N. Bhattacharya : Agrarian Change in Punjab, 1880-1940 Ph.D. thesis, JNU, 1985. Unpub.

89. RSIP. 49. op.cit.. p.62 ff.

affected price-formation in the long run.

The nature of development outlined above, with closer integration of Western Punjab, specifically the Canal Colonies with the world market, and the regional divide so to say, between the East and West, within Punjab, reflected a divergent pattern of development of trade. This had serious implications for the regional economy; further, the unevenness of development could and did lead to severe disjunction in periods of crisis. This, we may conclude, while lending prosperity to the Punjab peasant in a situation of 'boom' prices, increased and exposed his vulnerability in the crisis years.

While noting the integration of the Canal Colony track with the international market it needs to be remembered that these decelopment were taking place in a region, vast portions of which were till a few decades ago the home of semi-nomadic semi-posteral people and where cultivation was practised in a very limited sense. Subsequent developments proceeded at a rapid pace, so much so that within Punjab also these regions emerged as the most advanced in terms of integration into the international market.

At the same time, the region witnessed a close price-responsiveness in the case of most crops. Dharm Narain noted that along with the possible response to prices for most crops there were two other features. Firstly, in Punjab as a whole the correlation between price movement and acreage was higher than that in other provinces.[90] This strong correlation

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90 Dharm Narain, 1966, op.cit. passim

particularly stood out in the case of certain crops, such as cotton. Since the Canal Colonies formed a major cotton-growing tract oc Punjab, it appears that the correlation between crop acreage and price was also stronger in these district. The trend in relation to prices in Punjab was one of a long upswing from the 1860s to the 1920s. Despite cyclical and short-term fluctuations, as well as changes in the tempo of this general upward rise, this trend was clear and undisputable. It was in prices of foodgrains, especially wheat,[91] that this rise was more clearly visible. From the mid-1920s, a slight reversal of this trend could be seen, which came to its peak with the onset of the Depression. Although a slow upward movement was again visible from 1932-33, the general level of prices remained low till the mid-thirties. (See tables 4.12 and 4.13 below).

It is clear that the peasant in the Colony tracts was no longer an isolated peasant approaching an altogether unknown market. Rather the picture emerges of a peasant, deeply involved in a committed to volunterily or involuntarily, a whole range of relationships centring around the market and trade transactions.

But the question may well be asked as to where the peasant stood in this chain of commercial processes? to this there can be no single answer. For every peasant did not interact with the market at a similar plane. Peasant response to the market was also, consequently, not the same. Rather, what emerges is

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91 BEIP, Rural Pub. 7., passim.

Table 4.12

Fluctuation in Prices at Lyallpur

Price per Maund

Year	Gur			Rice			Cotton desi			Wheat			Rapeseed			Bajra		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
1905-6	5	0	0	2	4	0	7	4	0	2	8	0	4	0	0	3	4	0
1906-7	4	0	0	2	4	0	5	11	0	2	11	0	4	7	0	2	5	0
1907-8	5	0	0	3	1	0	6	11	0	3	8	0	6	4	0	4	0	0
1908-9	3	5	0	2	8	0	5	14	0	3	12	0	4	11	0	2	10	0
1909-10	3	14	0	2	8	0	7	3	0	2	10	0	4	9	0	2	4	0
1910-11	3	14	0	2	2	0	10	0	0	2	10	0	4	3	0	2	4	0
1911-12	5	4	0	2	10	0	8	4	0	2	14	0	4	8	0	3	2	0
1912-13	4	0	0	2	8	0	8	8	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	3	1	0
1913-14	4	0	0	2	11	0	7	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	3	4	0
1914-15	4	0	0	3	5	0	4	8	0	3	8	0	4	0	0	3	10	0
1915-16	6	0	0	3	4	0	6	0	0	3	0	0	4	6	0	4	3	0
1916-17	5	0	0	2	10	0	10	0	0	3	12	0	4	4	0	3	5	0
1917-18	4	0	0	2	11	0	18	0	0	3	12	0	3	7	0	3	1	0
1918-19	8	0	0	4	6	0	21	12	0	5	6	0	8	0	0	5	11	0
1919-20	9	4	0	4	8	0	19	0	0	4	12	0	11	8	0	4	7	0
1920-21	8	0	0	5	0	0	9	8	0	5	8	0	9	0	0	5	11	0
1921-22	8	8	0	5	8	0	10	0	0	5	12	0	7	8	0	6	15	0
1922-23	5	0	0	3	5	0	12	0	0	4	0	0	7	0	0	3	9	0
1923-24	5	0	0	3	2	0	20	0	0	4	0	0	7	0	0	3	0	0
1924-25	10	6	0	3	8	0	18	8	0	5	12	0	8	12	0	4	14	0
1925-26	7	8	0	4	0	0	14	0	0	5	5	0	7	10	0	5	15	0
1926-27	5	14	0	3	13	0	9	0	0	4	10	0	8	0	0	4	1	0
1927-28	5	7	0	3	8	0	12	0	0	4	6	0	7	12	0	4	0	0
1928-29	5	8	0	3	12	0	11	0	0	4	0	0	6	8	0	5	11	0
1929-30	5	9	0	3	5	0	6	12	0	3	0	0	5	15	0	4	8	0
1930-31	3	12	0	1	9	0	4	15	0	1	10	0	3	12	0	1	8	0
1931-32	3	8	0	1	9	0	7	8	0	1	14	0	3	3	0	1	10	0

Source : Report of the Abiana Committee, 1928, p.36.

Table 4.13

Fluctuation in Prices, Lahore, 1915-16 to 1934-1935

Price 1915-16 = 100

1915-16	-	100	1925-26	-	131
1916-17	-	108	1926-27	-	107
1917-18	-	140	1927-28	-	121
1918-19	-	190	1928-29	-	124
1919-20	-	120	1929-30	-	84
1920-21	-	170	1930-31	-	53
1921-22	-	168	1931-32	-	59
1922-23	-	119	1932-33	-	69
1923-24	-	175	1933-34	-	59
1924-25	-	141	1934-35	-	68

Source : A.R., Lahore, 1939, p. 10.

Table 4.14

Harvest Prices in Five Colony Districts

Rs. Annas per Maund

	Wheat		Cotton		American	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs. -	A.
Jhang						
a. 1919-20	5	0	18	0	-	
1920-21	6	12	12	8	-	
b. 1931-32	1	15	5	8	6	4
1932-33	2	8	6	3	7	4
1933-34	1	14	5	0	5	8
1934-35	2	0	7	8	9	4
1935-36	2	2	5	11	6	3

Contd., Table 4. 14

Lyallpur	Wheat	Cotton Desi	American
1919-20	4 -12	19- 0	-
1920-21	5 - 8	9- 8	-
1931-32	1 -14	7- 8	8- 11
1932-33	2 -14	6- 4	7- 6
1933-34	2 - 2	4-10	5- 12
1934-35	2 - 3	6-12	9- 12
1935-36	2 - 6	6- 4	7- 0
Montgomery			
1919-20	4 - 9	11- 2	-
1920-21	6 - 10	10- 0	-
1931-32	1 - 13	6- 4	7- 0
1932-33	2 - 10	5-12	8- 0
1933-34	2 - 0	4- 6	5-10
1934-35	2 - 0	4-12	8- 0
1935-36	2 - 5	5-14	6-10
Gujranwala			
1919-20	4 - 11	13-5	
1920-21	6 - 4	8-10	
1931-32	1 - 11	4-12	4-12
1932-33	1 - 10	6- 1	6-14
1933-34	2 - 0	4-11	5- 9
1934-35	2 - 2	5- 2	8- 2
1935-36	2 - 4	5- 8	7- 4
Shahpur			
1919-20	4 - 4	16-0	
1920-21	6 - 11	10-0	
1931-32	1 - 14	6-12	7-12
1932-33	2 - 10	5- 9	6- 8
1933-34	2 - 2	4-13	6- 0
1934-35	2 - 0	6- 0	8- 0
1935-36	2 - 2	6-12	8- 2

Source : ASBI, Vol.I., Relevant Years.

a complex set of responses from different sections of the peasantry, who entered the market at different points of the commercial process and, who entered into an entire gamut of relations with others who were also involved in the same process.

Where did the state stand vis-a-vis these transactions? Was it a curious by-stander, or an active participant? Was it non-interfering? If yes, was it consistent in its non-interference?

Section VI : Trade Policy

Government kept a close watch on the entire process, although in the 1890s, its stance was a familiar one – 'non - interference.' This was maintained right through the 1890s, when parts of Punjab, and the rest of India, were suffering from the dual effect of famine, and scarcity prices. As early as 1896, government clarified that, while it would be glad to receive information regarding market trends, its policy was "to abstain from entering into competition with the existing mercantile machinery by purchasing wheat on its own account."[92] In 1897, it reiterated that, "even in the worst conceivable emergency, so long as trade is free to follow its normal course, we would do more harm than good by attempting to interfere".[93] In 1898 again it refused to accede to the demand for fixation

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92 Rev. Agri. Fam., Dec 1896, A, Pro. 45, F. 49

93 Rev. Agri. Fam., April 1897, A, Pro 148, F. 85

or regulation of prices, even in the face of extreme famine conditions. Even while conceding that Punjab was in no better position than the rest of India in the years 1896-97 which saw an unprecedented rise in prices it refused to intervene, merely noting that cheap railway transport, the telegraph, the widespread ramifications of the grain trade and active speculation in grain stocks, all combined to keep prices at a high pitch. It was even noted that prices were lower than elsewhere in areas at a distance from the railways, indirectly accepting that price-rise was in no small way linked to recent developments.[94] It was later officially accepted that at the time of the 1900 famine, the total net export of grain from the two Lower Chenab Colony districts of Jhang and Gujaranwala alone was "more than sufficient to have supplied the total net import into the two districts of Hissar and Rohtak..."[95] Yet nothing was done at the time to change the direction of movement of food grains. Annual reports continued to note the "sudden and large rise in prices", the "failure of monsoon" and so on.[96] In 1908, when prices reigned extremely high, a demand raised in the Legislative Council for a provisional embargo on export of foodgrains, met with the following response :-

> "interference would involve disorganisation of trade and discouragement of the agriculturist

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94 Rev. Agri. Fam., April 1898, A. Pro. 31, F. 39

95 Rev. Agri. Fam., July 1901, A, Pro. 12, F. 92

96 Rev. Agri. Fam., December 1907, A, Pro. 30, F. 70

> at the very time it is essential to the welfare of the country that the producing and the distributing agencies alike should have every stimulus given to their activity. .....Interference with exports might produce at the beginning of a famine an artificial cheapness but it is by no means certain that even this result would be attained to any material extent and it is certain that the cheapness would not be permanent.....".[97]

By and large government adhered to an earlier decision, taken in 1894, that "export of food in times of famine should not be prohibited."[98] This maxim governed official commercial policy despite acute famine conditions prevailing, in Punjab and elsewhere. In the usual run of things, as prices rose, speculation rose, causing even greater distress to the mass of population.

The Imperial government's promptness in acting in 1914-15, was, therefore, a landmark departure from this earlier attitude of non-interference. Soon after the outbreak of war, official reports drew attention to the "exceptionally high prices of wheat and other foodgrains caused (ing) serious distress amongst the poorer classes of the people in certain towns of the Punjab".[99] Official despatches soon asumed an alarmist tone, attributing the recent price-rise to various factors— the holding off of September rains, speculation on the part of dealers, purchases by export firms and even, perhaps, panic. In an

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97 Rev. Agri. Fam., March 1908, A, Pro. 31, F. 63

98 Rev. Agri. Fam., January 1894, A, Pro. 27, F. 22 of 1893

99 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, Feb. 1915, A, Pro. 40-71, p.5.

official note, dated 11.9.1914, the Liuetenant Governor recorded that:

> in an exceptional situation of this kind, which has many elements of disturbance and political danger it would not, I think, be too wise to tie our hands by too close an adherence to orthodox political economy .[100]

Advocating intervention, he recalled that when Britain's supremacy over the seas was not fully assured, at the start of the war, the Home Government placed an embargo even on export of foodstuffs to the British Dominions abroad.[101] At this point itself, Sir Michael O'Dwyer mooted the idea of restrictions on the export trade in wheat and an Ordinance to provide for seizure of articles of commerce 'unreasonably held'.[102]

Within official ranks there was not much difference of opinion expressed regarding measures to be taken to check prices. J.Wilson's observations that the policy would injure the interests of "many millions of wheat-growers in the North of India..." and that the scheme was "politically dangerous", given the link between the Punjab peasant and the army recruits went largely unheeded in so far as the scheme continued.[103] Nor was his opinion that government should not use its monopoly of export "to depress internal prices" given much thought.[104] Wilsons too was not just a pro-India stance. He advocated increase in exports to England, at a time when the wheat price there was extra-ordinarily high

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100 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915, Pro. 29, p.5

101 ibid.

102 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade Feb. 1915, Pro. 65, p.29

103 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, Feb. 1915, Pro.65,2nd part, Note, dt. 30.4.1915.

104 Ibid.

"in order to bring down the price of wheat in England to something nearer the normal price."[105]

A number of steps were, meanwhile under active consideration. Implementation however, was held up since "a number of conflicting interests have to be considered".[106] There was the cultivator, the baniā, the exporter, the ship-owner, the Indian non-producing consumer, Government as an employer of non-producing consumers, port authorities, the Allies and the Empire. While disregarding none, officials clarified that, "there can be no doubt that the three dominating interests are the cultivator, the non-producing consumer in India and the Empire."[107] The two latter interests, it was argued, were identical in so far as both required cheap wheat, while the cultivator very naturally wanted to sell his produce at the best price obtainable. While other reasons were important, worry could be attributed to two main grounds: a) the increase in cost of feeding soldiers, prisoners and as payments of compensation to civil servants etcetera, and b) references in C.I.D. reports to rising public resentment and "possibility of rioting, attacks on grain shops and other disorderly manifestations, which may have the gravest political consequences". c) export to hostile countries.[108]

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105 Ibid.

106 Comm. Ind., Comm, Trade, May 1915, A Pro. 29, F-21, P-15

107 Ibid.

108 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915, A, Pro. 16-89.

After a series of discussions, amongst government official and with export firms, it was decided that private export of wheat and wheat flour was to be stopped, all trading with 'hostile' countries as well as through 'hostile' firms was to be put to an end, that government itself would decide on the total quantity of wheat permitted to go out of the country within a specified period and so on. Early in 1915 several steps were taken to implement this policy which came to be referred to as the 'Wheat Scheme'.[109] These included the setting up of a Wheat Committee, consisting of the appoinment of a Wheat Commissioner, announcement of regulations regarding exports as well as the agency of export and the fixation of a minimum price of wheat with the objective of bringing down prices. The price fixed was to be published for general information and alterations were to be publicly notified. Several of these measures were further discussed at a Conference held in Bombay in April 1915 in which representatives of exporting firms participated, along with official representatives. Funds were allocated, on atleast three occasions, from the Punjab Branch of the Imperial Indian Relief Fund to finance the opening of cheap grain shops.[110] By a communique issued in May 1915, government announced its decision to directly intervene in the finance of wheat trade.

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109 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, March 1916, A, Pro. 14-52, F212 of 1914, war, conf., and Pro. 53-86, F 210 of 1914.

110 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, July 1915, A, Pro, 137-139, F21, War, Conf.

It involved making wheat purchases in India against orders booked in England - a measure which had earlier been unanimously opposed by the firms dealing in wheat exports. The firms were, however, offered the option of taking repayment in India or in England - As far as the purchases were concerned, government had to pay a) the actual price paid by the firms for the wheat, b) railway charges, c) Port charges, d) a fixed allowance per quarter per shipment and sundry charges and e) a fixed commission at 3 d per quarter on wheat bought.[111] The firms selected as part of the scheme were those which had in previous years engaged in the export trade. The list drawn up in July 1915, included 8 firms, all European, infact English to be precise, with special care being taken to detect cases of Indians taking on European names when dealing in foreign trade during the war years. The firms chosen were, Messrs. Ralli Bros; Sunday, Patrick & Co; Louis Dreyfus & Co; E.D. Sassoon & Co; Clements, Robson & Co; Strauss & Co; Becker, Gray & Co., & Shaw Wallace & Co.[112] It was proposed to fix a maximum amount which may be exported in each month and to allot to each a share based on a percentage of average exports for the previous three years. On this calculation, the first three firms, for instance, got allotment of 20% each.[113] The firms that were

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111 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915, A, Pro. 16-89, F21, War, Conf.

112 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, July 1915, A, Pro. 104 F-149, Conf., War

113 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, July 1915, A, Pro. 106 F-149, Conf., War

appointed government agents in Karachi, were prohibited from dealing in wheat on private account.

It should be clear from the above that the implementation of the Wheat Scheme involved governmental interference at several points. What then prompted such deep involvement and intervention?

That the situation prevailing at the beginning of world war I was not very comfortable for an Imperial Government cannot be overlooked. The intelligence reports conveyed the nature of distress and discontent; the "considerable increase in dacoitie and other serious attacks on property," and to an "increasing spirit of lawlessness over a large part of the province".[114]

The Municipal Commissioner drew the Liutenant Governor's attention to the fact that "signs of starvation are apparent in the sunken cheeks of emaciated bodies of a large number, while the steady accession to the ranks of beggars accompained by a general slackness of business is aggravating the situation. Men with wolfish eyes and hungry looks are sometimes to be seen prowling about the shops of grain dealers....." [115]

In March 1915 it was reported that "within the last ten days there have been no less than 40 dacoities in three of the Western Districts, hitherto quite undisturbed, of the Province, which have their origin in famine prices."[116]

A telegram from Jhang District, reported that many Hindu shopkeepers and sāhukārs fled the town due to the plague

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114 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915, A,Pro.29., p.6

115 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915,A, Pro.16-89,dt.3.2.1915

116 Comm. Ind.,Comm. Trade, May 1915, A,Pro.50, pp.20-21,Conf.

leaving grain and other goods locked up in their shops. On the 18th of January, three shops were broken into and grain and other property stolen. On the 6th and 11th of February two other grain robberies were reported. It was recorded that:

> "large bands composed of the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, in some cases, helped by bad characters from the adjoining districts, entered the town and pillaged the deserted shop and houses, seizing grain and valuables, burning account books and in some cases setting fire to the houses themselves..."[117]

These spread to adjoining tracts and over the border into the Muzaffargarh and Multan districts. "Altogether over a 100 cases of dacoities were reported" [118]

We have stated earlier that official policy seemed to be motivated by fear on two major counts, the financial and the political. That there were other factors, which prompted introduction of the scheme, cannot be ruled out.

Pioneer, for one, contended that the wheat scheme presented government with an opportunity to solve an Imperial finance problem: for, "a maund of wheat has now a definite currency value, it enables government to remit funds to the Secretary of State in the shape of wheat."[119] It pointed to the peculiar finance position in London, emphasising that, "special circumstances requires special handling."[120] It went on to refer to the large liabilities Britain was incurring, to its colonies and others, in the form of payments to be made for foodstuffs, munitions and other war purchases, and sought to explain the 'wheat remittances,' so to

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117 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, May 1915, A, Pro.16-89.pp.41-42.

118 ibid.

119 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade,July 1915,A, Pro. 45-103,Appendix D.

120 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade,July 1915, A.Pro. 45-103, F 132, War. Conf.

say, as an attempt to maintain a balance of trade favourable to Britain in India.[121] While this contention of the Pioneer cannot be cross-checked, an interesting disclosure by The Times in London may also be mentioned here.

In a write-up 'Indian Wheat', dated 7.5.1915, the paper reported certain questions raised in the British Parliament by the Marquess of Lansdowne. These questions sought clarification on the fact that while in India wheat was being bought at a fixed price by GOI itself, i.e., 31s 5d. a quarter, the wheat thus purchased was to be distributed in England through the ordinary commercial agencies in the open market at approximately 65s to 67s per quarter. Did this not mean that GOI stood to make a large profit out of these transactions at the expense of the Indian cultivator? Would not the cultivator be compensated out of this profit, he asked?[122]

Sometime after this the British Government conceded that the transactions under the Wheat Scheme "left scope for a margin of profit".[123] Perhaps anticipating further discussion and criticism, the Finance Department considered it "politic to make it clear from the start that any profits resulting from it would not be used for the ordinary administrative expenses of the country but would be applied in some form or another for the benefit of agriculturists".[124]

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121 Ibid.

122 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, March 1916, A, Pro. 6-12. F 152 of 1915, War, Conf., App. B.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

That the amount involved was not negligible may be noted here. Upto February 1915 the profits estimated were approximately £ 139,000; whereas in March 1916, net proceeds were being estimated at £ 4,759,372.[125]

The Department's wishes were overruled by the Secretary of State who conveyed to it that "profits from wheat export scheme should in the first instance be credited to Revenue".[126] The decision came in for serious objections — from the Department as well as the Commerce and Industries department. The debate continued..... But even as a definite opinion emerged in favour of spending this amount on improvements in agriculture, specifically on wheat cultivation, moves were afoot to scuttle such a decision. Concerned officials raised questions as to how far were wheat growers alone entitled to this benefit? It was pointed out, and not without a basis, that the low price of wheat had also kept the price of gram lower than it would have been otherwise; attention was also drawn to the numerous class of people, "other than the cultivator who have been affected by the scheme such as freight and Exchange brokers, Exchange banks and other interests".[127] The ultimate decision if and when taken seems to have been lost in the post-war euphoria, but some indication is given in the files that some funds were diverted for use by the Department of Agriculture for promotion of,

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125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

'improvements'.

While all these governmental measures and policies were being enacted, and the Wheat Committee actively intervened to implement the wishes of the Secretary of State in India, neither the Indian peasant nor Indian Commerce were given an opportunity to have their say on matters specifically affecting them. The Finance Department, GOI, wrote to the Secretary of State in 1916, drawing attention to the "anomaly that India, whose material resources are greater than those of any of the Dominians is not yet in possession of any such organisation" or a Trade representative.[128]

The Department recommended the appointment of an Indian Trade Commissioner on a regular basis, finding that the 1914-15 experience of having such an official had proved valuable. Meanwhile, in the absence of any such representative authority, government continued to receive, now and then representations from the Chamber of Commerce, Brokers' Associations and so on enlisting specific grievances arising out of Government intervention.[129]

The flour mills had their own problems, due to restrictions on wheat-flour export in this period. The mill-owners drew attention to the fact that there was not sufficient demand in India for the flour - which could at this point neither

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128 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, Oct.1916, A Pro.10 F169 p. 599

129 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, Jan.1916, A, Pro.41-67, F323 of 1915

be locally sold, nor stored, threatenting the mills with stoppage of work and heavy losses.[130]

The impact of the wheat scheme and trade restrictions imposed during the War in any case extended beyond the crops specifically covered by restrictions. Thus commodities which were exported, along with wheat such as barley, gram, oilseeds, hides and skins etcetera, suffered. None of these crops ensured full shipments and were usually booked along with wheat; with private export of wheat being banned, these suffered since shipping company's would not book less than a full steamer cargo and none could ensure more than a parcel freight; thereby being compelled to not do this business at all.[131]

In April 1916 government decided that it was no longer necessary to maintain the scheme announced in March 1915, for inside the country prices had fallen to a comparatively low level while the demand from the U.K. for Indian wheat was no longer as urgent. It was decided that within India normal conditions of private export be restored, subject to a maximum restriction on the quantity permitted to be exported. The power to reimpose such restrictions as may be necessary, while the war lasted, was retained.[132]

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130 Comm. Ind., Comm.Trade, March 1916, A,Pro.17, 316/1915 Conf.War

131 Comm.Ind., Comm. Trade, June 1915, A, Pro. 217-256, p.508

132 Comm. Ind., Comm. Trade, Aug. 16, A, Pro-62, F.161, p.492

Thus the supervision of operations remained with the Wheat Commissioner, and direct purchases for military requirements continued. Restrictions on private trade with other countries were removed only at the end of September 1920, but a maximum permissible export amount was fixed upto March 1921 — 400,000 tons. A fixed maximum price was retained, till April 1921 when government control was withdrawn, in face of a heavy fall in prices in the U.K.[133] Such restrictions as remained were all removed in 1922.

Interestingly, no steps were taken to deal with the commercial situation later in the 1920s, when an unprecendented situation arose due to the depression. Only administrative measures, such as announcement of certain remissions in revenue and water rates as well as reduction of freight charges were resorted to. Intervention in the commercial sphere was reserved till the 1940s, when in the face of a second war:

> "In view of the situation which has arisen throughout India in respect of the supply and distribution of foodgrains, the Governor General in Council has decided to set up a Foodgrains Policy Committee, which shall examine the past policy and present position in India in relation to the supply, distribution and price of foodgrains, in the light of all relevant conditions including those imposed or liable to be imposed by the War, and to make recommendations both of policy and for administration, for securing, for the duration of the

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133 Enquiry into the Marketing of Wheat, 1937, p.45

War , maximum supply, equitable distribution and proper control of prices in relation to foodgrains. Free trade will not be considered except as an objective for the return of normal conditions."[134]

The Committee, with Sir Theodore Gregory as its Chairman consisted of 25 members including offical, non-official and provincial representatives, The representative from Puhjab was Mangat Rai, I.C.S. As per the procedures adopted by the Committee, in Punjab 6 firms engaged in the grain trade in the Province were appointed purchasing agents. Of these six, one purchased for the Defence department, while the others purchased for the civil needs of other provinces and states on the basis of allotment of GOI supply orders, made by the Director of food Supplies; for supplies within the Province, ordinary trade channels operated, while the Registrar of Co-operative Societies purchased for Provincial reserves.[135]

What was the net result of these measures?

As admitted by the Committee in its Report, "under the existing conditions in India, price-control is being exercised by Government, in practically every hole and corner of the country. The foodgrains trade is no longer free to operate as it did in pre-war days, or even as it did two years ago. The process of acquisition, distribution and consumption are

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134 Report of the Foodgrains Committee, 1943,

135 Ibid, p. 53

all affected by governmental activity and so it is inevitable that prices should be affected. Whether statutory price-control is extended or not, prices ruling in foodgrains markets today are no longer the expression of the 'laws of supply demand' as they are conventionally understood to be. Foodgrain prices in India today are the combined effect of the forces of supply and demand and the administrative influences which are being brought to bear....."[136]

In the course of discussions in the Committee many issues were raised. Some of the observations on the issue of pricing, statutory price control, and inter-regional price differentials were interesting. Significantly, the Committee paid attention to the emergence of an all-India price. Referring to "normal conditions", with laws of free market prevailing, it observed that the Indian price structure for the leading foodgrains must be an integrated whole. Wheat in Calcutta and Bombay will sell for an amount equal to the mofussil price plus the cost of transport or, if the mofussil price rises above parity with the rest of the World, imports will penetrate even into the Punjab itself, lower prices there and establish an all India - equilibrium, with the possibility that up-country prices may be higher than port prices . Clearly, there seemed for crops like wheat, "something which can be described as an all India price, not uniform throughout the country, but a related

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136 Ibid, p.83

system of prices."[137]

It was this situation which was jeopardised due to official intervention. The Committee observed that with provincial control over foodgrains,

> "because freedom of movement no longer obtains, the integration of Indian prices has ceased and the level of prices in different parts of India is determined by the existence of Provincial and State frontier lines".[138]

The Committee was of the view that some of this situation could have been avoided had steps been taken towards an all-India foodgrains monopoly.

To conclude the discussion on this aspect a few points may be made a note of. Firstly, the Wheat Scheme remained an outstanding example of government intervention in the field of commerce and trade. Secondly it was prompted primarily by political considerations. That Government concern for curbing popular discontent was not miscalculated may be guaged from the fact that the War years did. infact, witness the rise of an unprecedented mass movement against foreign rule. on all-India scale. Thirdly, that once implemented, the Scheme proved financially profitable as well. Fourthly, despite this 'aberration' in official policy, government once again slid back into its non-interventionist stance.

Section VII - Agricultural Commodities Market

A basic assumption of official policy in and toward the Canal Colonies was the firm belief that canal irrigation and the commercialisation of agriculture that accompanied it, led to increased prosperity resulting from a combined situation

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137 Ibid.

138 Ibid. p.84

of rising prices and rising production; hence it was also believed that the case for enhancement of land revenue and water-rates was strong since prosperity was, in the first instance, made possible by government's acting in such a way as to make the two main resources-land and water— available to cultivators. To substantiate its point, government also cited a 30% to 50% increase in cash rents in a large number of assessment circles in the Colony tracts during the second decade. By the time the depression descended on the region, enhancement of revenue and water-rates had taken place atleast twice in most of these circles, at times even thrice.

In effect the assumptions of government policy were diametrically the opposite of what was initially being argued by the nationalists and what has subsequently been substantially proved as correct by the wealth of information and studies in commercialisation patterns in different regions of the country. These studies have brought to light ample facts regarding both the timing of sale and the agency of sale to expose the real nature of sales - which were more often in the nature of forced commercial transactions arising out of contingencies such as revenue payment, repayment of loans and so on. It has been proved that,very often, even when peasents sold their produce at a time when prices reigned high, the nature of market organisation considerably brought down their margin of profit, while more often than not they had to sell immediately after harvest

when prices generally were not very high in any case; consequently, it has been argued that the large share of profit margins arising from reigning high prices was in fact cornered by landlords, money lenders and traders while peasants tanded to get caught deeper into debt and distress, very often moving on to pauperization and depeasantisation. This cycle of events, first highlighted by Chowdhury on the basis of his study of agrarian conditions in Bengal has by now been substantiated by studies of the commercial process in other parts.[139]

We do not wish to propagate a simplistic notion or model of 'forced commercialisation' here. Infact, all these studies have by and large, delved into the complexities of the process and successfully refuted charges of 'simplification' by critics of the theory.

What we now look at is the pattern that emerged in the Canal Colonies.

First, the timing of the sales. For almost all crops, sales took place soon after the harvest. Cotton was in most cases sold before the closing of ginning factories at the end of march. Toriā was, in rare cases, held up till the next crop was sown, but as a general rule it too was sold as it came in or even from the heap in the field. The greater part of wheat was sold just after the harvest, in June and July, while the rest was kept over till October when the surplus needed for

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139 Chowdhury, B.B., 1964

home consumption was sold.[140]

While this was not true of all cultivators,big and small, this was the case with a majority of cultivators from all the districts. The reasons for harvest-time sales were many. In Lyallpur villages there was "little holding up of produce after harvest in order to secure a better price".[141] This was attributed to the fact that the zamindars had, "no proper arrangements for storage in their houses and government demands have to be paid after harvest."[142] In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, most cultivators, "pressed by moneylenders and to meet other demands, sell at once".[143] A few did hold up some wheat and gram, with a view to securing better prices, after selling a portion to meet immediate demands. Those who did hold up, complained of "loss suffered through the attacks of insects as they have no adequate storage facilities."[144]

From Sargodha, Shahpur, it was reported that the cultivators, mostly peasant proprietors, "cannot generally afford to let their cotton be stored for any considerable period; they want ready cash to satisfy their pressing demand..."[145] In Gujranwala it was found that "as the date of payment approaches he (the cultivator) must usually sell sufficient to meet the

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140 BEIP., PVS.4, op.cit., pp 87 ff.

141 Ibid., p.91

142 Ibid.

143 PVS. 6, op.cit, p. 143

144 Ibid.

145 PPBECR, Vol. I., Evidence, Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Society, Sargadha, p. 278

demand, whatever the price. In many cases, if he waits, he gets less than he could have obtained previously, as there is generally a rush of sellers to meet the demand of the lambardār."[146]

Yet this should not be taken to mean that there was no holding-up of produce with a view to obtaining a better price, nor should one, from this, deduce a poor correlation between market/price and peasant response. For, to some extent atleast, the trend towards rising prices, especially in the pre-first World War period, "stimulated the practice of holding up produce for a better price".[147] In Lyallpur tahsils, it was found, around this time, that "zamindars have begun to indulge in profiteering and holding-up stocks for a rise. These tactics were adopted by them with great success in 1918 when they held up the bulk of their wheat and bhusā against a continuously rising market....."[148]

This, however, was not and could not be a uniform pattern since the status of the cultivator pre-determined, to an extent, whether or not holding-up was possible. This was confirmed by an investigation into the marketing of wheat, — it was found, that the size of the holding had a great deal to do with the

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146 PVS, 6, p-143

147 BEIP PVS, 11, op.cit., p-169 148

148 Rev. Agri. Rev., July,1920, A,Pro 122 op.cit.F-15

percentage retained. This related to both — proportion retained for consumption as well as holding-up with the intention of receiving a better price.[149]

Infact there was a well marked periodicity in the arrivals in the market. In the case of wheat, for instance, arrivals commenced in April, increased considerably in May, attained a peak in June and then began to fall off in July. By September the sales were reduced to an insignificant amount.[150] (See table below) In Gojra also, the bulk of the seasons' arrivals, approximating 55% of total produce, occurred in the months April to June.[151]

Table 4.15

IMPORTS OF WHEAT (IN MAUNDS) IN LYALLPUR MARKET, 1930-33

Month	1930	1931	1932	1933
January	96,250	71,000	39,750	37,625
February	94,750	77,000	43,000	26,500
March	115,250	95,750	73,500	36,000
April	85,750	75,500	82,750	39,000
May	111,900	116,000	273,000	126,750
June	217,250	350,750	316,000	236,250
July	122,250	228,500	228,250	169,250
August	N.A.	165,775	113,250	26,000
September	46,750	117,509	124,250	27,500
October	15,500	155,250	91,000	28,750
November	57,000	101,250	25,620	31,000
December	34,500	94,750	50,500	28,250
Total	997,150	1,649,025	1,460,870	812,875

Source : See f.n.150

149 BEIP, Pub.49, op.cit., p.15

150 Ibid p.19

151 Mktg. of Wheat, 1937, op.cit., p.17

Other factors too acted as a disincentive to holding-up. Many who appeared before the Banking Enquiry Committee pointed out that holding-up did not always pay the cultivator. On the British Cotton Growing Association's farm, Khanewal, it was found that while "on the whole in most years the price certainly goes up, if you work out the cost of storing and decrease in weight and loss by weevel etc., I doubt very much whether it would be a paying proposition."[152] In any case, holding-up till the next harvest was impractical and unwise since "grain of a previous harvest does not command so good a price as that of the current harvest. It may be spoilt by rain or eaten by rats. The owner has borrowed against it, and if he does obtain a better price by waiting, this is usually more than offset by the interest accrued etcetera....."[153] Many who gave evidence before the Banking Enquiry Committee, repeated and reaffirmed that with the onset of the depression in the late twenties, it was not very wise for peasants to hold up - "many who stored last year made losses."[154] It was pointed out that "prices of late have had a tendency to fall after harvest and those who delayed selling, either cotton or wheat, have suffered.[155] Roberts, of the Khanewal farm confirmed that he lost out on cotton everytime he stored it and therefore never advocated

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152 PPBECR, ev., Vol.2, p. 940

153 Ibid., Vol.1, p. 251

154 Ibid., Vol.2, p. 682

155 Ibid., p. 933

the practice, for, "you cannot always get rid of it at the end of the season." [156]

In normal years wheat prices showed a downward trend from January onwards, culminating in a low point during April and June, while from July onwards it was again an upward trend which continued, but for a small dip in September, throughout the winter, reaching a peak in December. This however was not the case in tree Depression years. Table IV.16 below gives the prevailing market and village rates for wheat in four markets of Lyallpur market.

Thus the heavy fall in prices due to Depression checked the slow, though steady, trend towards holding-up produce for sale at a better price at a later point of time. It did not however, put an end to the practice altogether. Further, over the years it led to holding-up by merchant -traders. This practice, first noticed on any large scale during the first world war period, gathered strength, so much so that proportion held-up by cultivators came down to only about 20% of wheat was held up by merchants.[157] An agent from Gojra reported that 20-25% of grain marketed in this mandi was generally stored in Kothās by commission agents on behalf of beopāris from outside the district. Much of this, upto 60% to 70% was believed to be pledged as security with the banks for taking

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156 Ibid., p. 940

157 Ibid., p. 941

TABLE : .16

RATES PREVAILING IN THE MARKETS AND THE NEAREST VILLAGE IN LYALLPUR

1930 - WHEAT

MARKET	APRIL		MAY		JUNE		JULY	
	Market	Village	Market	Village	Market	Village	Market	Village
	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P	Rs A P
Lyallpur	3 6 4	3 0 0	3 4 6	3 0 5	3 3 6	2 14 2	2 7 6	- - -
Chak Jhumra	3 5 2	- - -	- - -	2 14 8	3 2 0	2 13 4	2 5 6	- - -
Jaranwala	3 5 4	3 0 0	3 3 6	2 13 11	- - -	2 9 2	2 7 6	- - -
Toba Tek Singh	3 4 6	- - -	3 3 0	- - -	2 13 2	- - -	2 7 6	- - -

Figures show monthly average rates of wheat per maund.

Source: BEIP, Pub. 38, P-19

advances.[158]

In fact there was a concerted move by a merchant - money - lender combine to control produce sales well before arrivals in the market in order to reap a higher margin of profit. To this end, moneylenders "encouraged loans in order that the surplus stock may be brought to them by zamindars for sale....."[159] It was also not uncommon to find that, "in the village the moneylender and grain merchant are one" while in the mandi,

"the grain merchant is the village moneylender's banker as well as being the purchaser of his crops."[160] Moneylenders of Lyallpur, who were also Commission Agents, testified before the Banking Enquiry that, "moneylemding is only a side show; our main business is commission agency."[161] They admitted advancing small amounts, sometmes directly and sometimes through village moneylenders,

> "to those persons who promise to bring their produce to us for sale. When the harvest is ready, they bring their produce to us for sale, and we charge our commission on the sale as well as realise the debts due to us." 162

Matters were however, in this regard, neither simple nor straight forward. A struggle was clearly on,— to hold on te the produce for as long as possible and till as far as possible by the peasant preducer so as to reap some more benefit from

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158 Ibid., p.719

159 Ibid., p.127

160 Ibid., p.125

161 PPBECR, ev., Vol.2

162 Ibid

the commercial transaction, while the merchant-moneylender was, in turn, trying to spread his tentacles as far into the interior as possible. Thus while the cultivators preferred to sell their produce and pay back loans in cash, sāhukārs "advanced only on promise of repayment in kind" thus attempting to ensure purchase of produce at lower prices.[163] Needless to say, the demand for repayment was made at harvest time with the moneylender very often going in person to the harvest floor on the day and at the time the produce was to be divided and conveyed to the cultivator's house. We have no definite idea as to the proportion pledged - some argued that "hardly 25% of the crop remains in the hands of tillers, the rest in one form or the other passes into the hands of sāhukārs and through them to the banks or to the exporters.[164]

Was the produce transferred thus 'surplus' or as pointed out, it constituted "the major portion of the poor man's bread who cannot afford to retain it long having already incurred debts and now forced to sell it to meet his liabilities and to pay land revenue?[165] One estimate put the share left to the cultivator after repayment of dues and loans at barely enough to last him three or four months. At the same time it was pointed out that cultivators were better off in the Colonies as compared to others, although, "as years advance, conditions

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163 Ibid., p.929

164 BEIPPVS 11, opcit., p.127

165 PPBECR, ev.Vol.2, op.cit., p.605

are becoming just like those of the old districtss.[166]

Are we to conclude that the peasant in the Canal Colony was in the same position as the indebted, depressed, dependent peasant in other parts of the country? Did the entire process of Colonisation and commercialisation reduce him to greater poverty, greater dependence on the sāhukār?

In fact our evidence points to a complex situation. This complexity stemmed from various factors — which pointed towards different trends. As pointed out earlier, different categories/ classes of cultivators entered the market at different stages and from varying standpoints; added to this was the commodity being sold and its market value, the complexity was heightened by the condition of the market in different parts of the Colony districts, the nature of the market, its structure and organisation. But the very fact that so much information is available in our evidence with regard to this aspect of the peasant's activity suggests that his interaction with the 'market' was neither stray, nor seldom. It was rather, a state of flux, with the peasant attempting to overcome the limitations of a village existance and relate at close quarters with an alien, urban market; with other forces opposed to this acting so as to counter this very process.

The number of producers who sold directly in the market was by no means small, although the proportion of crop thus

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166 PPBECR, ev., Vol.1, op.cit., p.211

sold depended often on the crop itself. Cotton was sold principally in the village, while market sales by cultivators of wheat were fairly high: Toriā was generally sold in the central market, while gur went in roughly equal proportion to the village shop and the mandi. This however is a very general observation. In fact the pattern differed from district to district, or even village depending on distance from the market, the means of transport available and the crop concerned.[167]

In Kala Gaddi Thamman village, Lyallpur, there were two main avenues for the disposal of produce, a) the village shopkeeper and b) the Lyallpur mandi.[168] In Durrana Langgana, Multan, the cultivator disposed of his produce, "either by selling it on his own harvest floor to the village shopkeeper, or by conveying it to the central market".[169] At the same time here it was a "common practice for the cultivator to sell his produce to the family shopkeeper since he "financed all his needs through out the year and also promised to help him in tiding over future emergencies."[170] While big landlords did sometimes market their crop in the mandi, the smaller ones experienced" great difficulty" in bringing their produce, especially cotton to the mandi.[171] In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala,

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167 BEIP,PVS, 4 and 6 op.cit., passim

168 BEIPPVS 4, p.88

169 BEIPPVS 11, p.160

170 Ibid, p-161

171 Ibid.

village produce was purchased generally by "regular traders", who were ghummars, Khatris and Aroras, thoug "village shop-keepers also sometimes buy".[172] A village lambardar - a Jat owner who did not cultivate, also made purchases, while oil-seeds were bought by telis. A co-operative commission shop in Gujranwala, though well spoken of, had only a "limited clientele", with hardly 25% of the producers taking to it.[173] This was explained partly by the fact that the ghummars, hired for carrying produce to the market, "usually finish up by taking the produce to their own brokers who feed them free on such visits and advance them small sums of Rs.20 to Rs.40 without interest for short periods such as a month."[174] The producers here, it appears found it inconvenient to accompany them to the market and merely confined themselves to giving instructions while the ghummars, pretending forgetfulness, ended up at the brokers', and even sold some of the produce on the sly.[175]

For Montgomery, again, the evidence was diverse. While in some jangli villages, "people had begun to market their own crops occasionally, especially in the rabi harvest," it was also true that "in many villages the zamindars do not market their crops at all but sell them to the sahukar".[176] The indebted small holder sold "perforce to his creditor who in

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172 BBIP PVS,6, p.139
173 Ibid., p.145
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 PPBECR, ev., Vol-I, op.cit., p.140

the majority of cases is the village shopkeeper;"[177] The batai tenant did the same. While many under no such burden sold their crops at the mandi, "in at-least two villages where indebtedness is slight, crops are still sold to sāhukārs as being an easy and convenient method of disposal....."[178] In the Nili Bar Colony, new settlers who were not indebted to any local arhti or moneylender, sold in the mandi, but in the old abadi settlers were compelled to sell to local shopkeepers and moneylenders in the absence of a mandi close by.[179]

In Shahpur, hardly 10% of 117 persons covered by an enquiry took the produce to the market, and only one of these was a small holder. The Assistant Registrar ascribed this chiefly to debt "which obliges the debtor to sell through his creditor, who is generally the village shopkeeper..... but it may be doubted whether a great many more would market their produce even if they were not in debt."[180] It appears that in much of the district market relations had not

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177. Ibid. P-120

178. Ibid., P-140

179. Ibid., P-471

180. BECR, Op. cit., P-48

developed. Thus in the Southern Thal, "a complete lack of business instinct deprives the owners of much of their profits".[181] Many of the peasants in Khushab tahsil, "stored their grain and wool with the village shopkeeper, and obtain from him their daily requirement, at the end of the year he informs them of the balance due to, or, much more usually, from them."[182]

This was in direct contrast with villages in Lyallpur, for here, the markets were in direct touch with international markets, so that "farming is more a matter of business, and the influences of the outside world are being felt to a greater extent than in most villages in the older districts".[183]

The variation in districts apart, the crop being sold also made a difference. The enquiry into the marketing of wheat concluded that the proportion of sales by growers themselves was more than four-fifths in districts where means of communication and transport were available and developed and the amount of crop marketed considerable.[184] A survey in three districts revealed

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181. A.R., Khushab, 1915, Op.cit., p-33

182. Ibid.

183. BEIP PVS, 4, Op.cit. p-ii

184. BEIP, 38, op.cit. p-49.

that in 1930-31, 78.4% of wheat sales in Ferozepur, 72.6% in Lyallpur and 70.3% in Attock districts were made by cultivators; at the sametime the total amount involved in these sales was 77.0%, 75.0% and 66.1% respectively of the total amount of wheat sold in these markets.[185] The majority of sellers in these markets travelled a distance of about 10 miles, although in the case of Lyallpur the markets served villages within a radius of upto 35 miles. As was to be expected, in the case of sellers travelling longer distances, the quantity sold was greater.[186]

The case of cotton was different. In Lyallpur itself, only 33% of the crop was disposed of in the Central market while 67% was sold in the village.[187] In Kala Gaddi Thamman, out of 888 maunds sold only 225 maunds were sold in markets outside the village, the rest was all disposed of in the village itself.[188] In the jangli village of Montgomery, the shopkeeper marketed most of the cotton including that produced by those not

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185. BEIP, Pub.39, op.cit. p-50.

186. BEIP, Pub.38, op.cit. p-52

187. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit. p-88

188. Ibid.

indebted to him.[189] There were instances of cultivators handing over to them, small amounts, as they were picked, between September and January, rather than collecting it and marketing it altogether. This habit of bringing the cotton to the shop as it was picked was "most uneconomical for the zamindar," for, each day he was handed a chit stating the amount of cotton he had handed over. "At the end of the month the amounts are totalled, an average price is agreed upon, and he is credited with the result. He has no check upon the shopkeeper since he cannot read Hindi. And the amount finally credited to his account does not represent by any means the true value of the cotton handed over".[190] Sardar Jegandra Singh of Montgomery, in his evidence before the Indian Cotton Committee, stated that "in the small Jangli villages, the cotton went straight to the baniā, it did not go to the house of the producer at all. The baniā stored for the producer and made advances of money and bought the cotton at rates which he fixed himself often very much below the market price".[191]

For Shahpur, Maulvi Fateh-Ud-din, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Punjab, testified that figures collected

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189. PPBECR, ev. Vol. op.cit. p.133
190. Ibid.
191. ICC. Vol. 1, Pt.1, op.cit. p.119.

of cotton coming to the market in November and December 1919 revealed that "over 85% of the kapās that came into Sargodha belonged to the village baniās".[192] In the event of the cultivator being indebted in 9 cases out of 10, the produce naturally went to his creditors, be it the village baniā or the commission agent. In the Jhelum Colony it appears, forward contracts were "not an uncommon thing; sometimes standing crops are sold."[193] In Shahpur too, cotton reached the export firm after passing through several hands - the village baniā, Commission agent and the factory owner. As in other markets the marketing of wheat was, comparatively, found "very easy".[194]

The reason many more cultivators refrained from taking their produce to the market themselves, partly also lay in the problem of transportation. In a note prepared by the Deputy Commissioner of Lyallpur, in 1905 attention was drawn to this problem - faced by a vast section of agriculturists of all classes who grow for the market but had no means of transportation. It

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192. Ibid, p.146

193. Ibid.

194. PPBECR, ev., Vol. 1, op.cit. p.1082

was pointed out that a professional class of carriers was emerging. These transported produce to the market at a considerable cost. The officer mooted the idea of construction of mono-rails or other form of light railway which would facilitate cheaper transport and, at the sametime, encourage village level purchase by dealers. But no further action took place on this account.[195]

Meanwhile, in most villages, camels and donkeys continued to be used to transport produce to the mandi. In Lyallpur villages, gaddās or bullock carts were used while village shopkeepers kept ponycarts for this purpose.[196] The Rakh Branch Circle, which later formed part of Lyallpur district was perhaps most advanced with respect to cultivators' possessing individual means of transport - country-carts existing roughly in the proportion of one to every square. But even here, Janglis did not posses any at all.[197] In Gajju Chak none of the cultivators had a cart while donkeys were owned by ghumars of neighbouring villages. These transported produce, charging 2 annas per maund for the 9 miles from the

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195. Rev. Agri. Genl., Sept. 1905, A. Pro-44, F-61

196. REIP PVS 4, op.cit., p-91

197. A.R., Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, opcit.

village to the mandi. At times they themselves purchased the produce from the cultivator, then transported it to the mandi for re-sale.[198] In Durrana Langana village there were 24 families of camelmen in the village. These charged 8 annas to 1 Rupee per load (of 8 maunds) from the village to the market. Even here the landlords paid less since most of the camelmen were retainers of the big Dehar landlords in the region.[199]

Can we conclude from this observation about village level sales that the benefit of price-rise was not really reaching the cultivator? And did sales in the mandi or central market necessarily imply a higher return for the cultivator. Far from it, for here again various factors were at work. While wider circulation of information related to prices, in the international market and at other trade centres within India could contribute to the peasants' bargaining position even within the village, the organisation of sales in the market and nefarious market practices could deprive the peasant of his due even when sales were contracted in the mandi. There is sufficient evidence to prove that

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198. BEIP PVS, 6, p.143

199. BEIP PVS, 11, p.168

these contradictory trends were infact at work in West Punjab villages at this time.

The Lyallpur village survey emphatically stated that the cultivators would not accept an "unreasonable price" since the village was "in daily communication with Lyallpur and sellers are as a rule in touch with the prices of produce prevailing there".[200] Consequently, no matter which avenue of sale was used, "the final price was fixed only after a good deal of bargaining.[201] Another report observed that in Lyallpur even when cultivators sold to village shopkeepers, they sold "entirely in accordance with market or mandi prices. No village can be visited in which the zamindars are not aware of what the price in the mandi for a staple was two or three days prior to one's visit...".[202] The picture as it emerges from these accounts seems too bright, in favour of the cultivator. This has to be accepted with some reservation since table 4.16 cited above shows that atleast in the year 1930, the seller in the village suffered from both, the progressive fall in prices and the difference between market and village

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200. BEIP, PVS 4, p.39
201. Ibid.
202. Rev. Agri., Rev., July 1920, A, Pro 122, F-157

level prices. It also perhaps clarifies the reasons for cultivators preferring to sell produce in the mandi themselves.

The village survey for Durrana Langana noted a similar 'improvement' as the Lyallpur survey. Here too it was found that the old practice of needy cultivators fixing prices long before the ripening of crops, with their creditor shopkeepers had "practically died out".[203] It was common it said, to sell at the Multan market rate on that day, less the cost of carriage, octroi dues and other charges incidental to sale in the central market. Generally the "village rate is about four annas per maund lower than the Multan rates".[204] However, the same report admitted that while both, the cultivator and the shopkeeper were in touch with the market, "the latter is the better informed of the two and is generally able to turn the matter to his advantage".[205]

In Gajju chak, Gujranwala, where most sales were transacted in the village itself and in any case, cultivators themselves seldom took their produce to the

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203. BEIP, PVS, 11 p. 160.

204. Ibid.

205. Ibid.

market, relying on 'ghumars' for this task; it was found that in all transactions undertaken in the village, the village shopkeeper played a prominent part. He helped fix the price and measure the produce, and was generally "relied upon as an expert in market knowledge and measurement".[206] In Montogomery, where loans were often advanced against the security of produce, agriculturists carried their produce to the commission agents. In their evidence before the Banking Enquiry Committee, zamindars confirmed that often in such cases the commission charged was higher than the bazaar rate.[207] When the produce was purchased by village moneylenders, they did so at a rate lower than the prevailing market rate - at timesl Rupee per maund, in the case of cotton and 8 to 12 annas in the case of wheat.[208]

Not only was the cultivator being drawn into a vortex of commercial relationships which at once exposed him to the vagaries of the market, he was at the same time, placed disadvantageously in the whole process. The picture that emerges from the reports is one of an unknowing cultivator being thrown among sāhukārs, petty shopkeepers, dhanwāis ghumars, arhtis, agents, factory owners, towns merchants... and the works, all of whom

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206. BEIP, PVS, 6 op.cit., p.140.

207. PPBECR, ev, Vol.1, op.cit., p.897

208. Ibid.

seemed to be out to get at what was his due. Thus at whatever place or point he entered this network he came up against heavy odds - be it, the village market, or the town mandi.

Describing the scene in Lyallpur, the village survey for Kala Gaddi Thamman stated that "during these operations the seller is practically in the hands of his commission agent."[209] All charges for expenses incurred during the rate - for weighing, receiving (in the case of grain), for sewing and filling into bags were paid by the commission agent, to be charged against the seller alongwith his arhat and other market dues which included a levy of sorts for 'Dharam', i.e., for religious purpose, and 'Gaushala', for cow protection and so on.[210]

The Gajju Chak cultivator who sold in the village itself did not fare any better. Here in the village, "the measurement of produce such as wheat, gram, rice, oil-seeds, is always done with capacity measures, either by the shopkeeper or by the trader who is purchasing; the seller seldom does it, acting merely as an interested

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209. BEIP, PVS, 4, op. cit., p. 89

210. Ibid.

spectator of the operation.[211] It was pointed out that with these capacity measures, "manipulation is comparatively easy, "for the measure may be filled a little higher than the right level, or grain may be concealed between the hands and the sides of the measure. It was admitted that "in large sales the seller may lose considerably in this way and little attention is paid to his occasional protests while the measuring is being done...[212] If the shopkeeper weighed, he too favoured the purchaser in the hope that the latter "may seek his assistance in future transactions;[213] the charge for weighing, 1 pice per Rupee, would fall on the purchaser and customarily half of this was due to the seller but "in practice he seldom does so, and appropriates the whole for himself".[214] In case the weighman was called in for measuring, he too was partial towards the purchaser. In Gujranwala, while the grain was being weighed, the agents took "about a seer of the produce from the unweighed heap after every 4 mounds have been weighted; this he puts aside as remuneration for his own menials for the petty services they may, or may not,

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211. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit. p. 140.

212. Ibid.

213. Ibid.

214. Ibid.

have rendered to the producer in connection with the sale".[215] The weighman was also entitled to 1½ seers of the produce for every 8 manuds weighed and when the work was nearly over, "1 or 2 seers of the produce are left unweighed for the agents, changar or sweeper".[216] Additional charges were paid here as in Lyallpur, while the purchasers also made deductions for dust.

In Gajju Chak the village shopkeeper was found in possession of two sets of 1 seer and 2 seer stamped weights, one comparatively new and the other old and slightly worn. The elder set were 1 tola less than their new equivalents and it was observed that "he used the new weights for buying and the old ones for selling".[217] It was felt that the "shopkeeper does as he likes. The ignorant consumer suffers also from the underweighing of the goods he gets in return".[218].

In Multan villages it was assessed that the shop-keeper weighed in a manner as to gain 1 to 5 seers per maund. Meanwhile, if the cultivator sold in the central market, he became a victim of the dhanwai's (weighman)

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215. Ibid, p.140

216. Ibid.

217. Ibid., p.148-9

218. Ibid.

practices; who it was admitted had a "large field for dishonest operations".[219] Over the years, it also transpired that "some of the imports which were formerly borne by the dhanwāi himself have now been transferred to the seller and the increase in others, which was justified during the era of high prices consequent on the war, is being maintained even when prices have fallen".[220] Yet, the services of these dhanwāis, who also acted as commission agents, seemed indispendable, especially in the absence of ready buyers. In Multan the charges on the seller were:[221]

a)	of the pandi (labourer). who unloads and empties the bags.		
b)	brokerage	-	5 annas per ₨ 100 -dhanwais commission.
c)	Ārit	-	4 to 8 annas per ₨ 100 -dhanwāis commission.
d)	weighing charges	-	1 anna per maund -also payable to the dhanwai
e)	Kat (rebate)	-	2½ annas per 100 paid to dhanwai on account of cash and prompt payment.
f)	Shāgirdi	-	2½ annas % or Khattak per maund for help in weighing -to dhanwais apprentices.

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219. BEIP PVS, 11, op.cit., p·165

220. Ibid., p·166

221. Ibid., p·162

g) tulai - few handfuls of grain.

h) gaushala - 1 to 2 pice % for maintenance of old and sickly cows.

A survey of the weights and measures conducted in mandis, cities and villages of 12 areas of the province revealed that only 50.3% of the stamped, and 12% of the unstamped, Kachhā weights were correct, while only 1 in 3 scales was accurate.[222]

The investigators reiterated what the Royal Commission on Agriculture had pinpointed almost a decade earlier, i.e., the need to have in each market, "a weighbridge installed with suitable arrangements for its use," so that any cultivator wishing to do so could "weigh his cart of produce and also his cart when emptied, and be given a free certificate of these weighments which all parties doing business in that market should be required to accept as final".[223] The Commission was of the opinion that the installation should be extended to unregulated markets by local governments. But the recommendations went largely unheeded.

The Colony market enquiry conducted at the bebest of the Banking Enquiry Committee, was clearly of the

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222. BEIP, Pub. 39, op.cit. p.41.

223. Ibid., p.45

opinion that a "powerful factor in deterring cultivators from marketing their own produce is the way the ordinary market is organised. It is dominated by the traders and the cultivator, when he goes there can hardly help feeling himself an alien. He has no voice in the control of market arrangement, no say in the fixing of market dues, no representation on market panchayats, and little or no means of ascertaining outside prices".[224] These disadvantages came down more heavily on the smaller cultivators.

The disadvantages of market organisation were most glaring in the case of cotton sales. It was generally said that the way cotton sales were conducted in the mandi ended up in "much bickering ". The procedure of the sale itself worked against the cultivator. In Lyallpur, for instance cotton to be sold was carted to the town and taken outside the factories. Even though a price would have been agreed upon through commission agents.

> "once the carts enter the factory and unloading is in progress, allowances are demanded for various reasons. Three or four times during unloading. Samples are taken to test the ginning percentage and this provides further excuse, if any is necessary, for more allowances to be demanded. Against this sort of sharp

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224. Ibid., p. 51

> practice, the seller, though nominally supported by his commission agent, has no real remedy. Unloading has begun, part of his consignment is already mixed with other cotton in the godowns, and in any case there are no storage facilities for cotton in the mandi."225

The Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Lahore admitted that "in the Punjab it is an open secret that the growers of cotton are very much disappointed with the present system of marketing".[226] As elsewhere, here too the pooling system in vogue amongst factory owners caused problems for the cultivator.

Comparatively speaking, Okara had a better reputation than other markets in this respect. No pool system existed here since Sir Ganga Ram, a prominent agriculturist - landowner in the region, was opposed to it. Also, prices in Okara were usually "above those in the other markets in the district," owing, as earlier pointed out, to better correlation with Karachi prices. Cultivators, consequently, sold larger quantities in the market.[227]

In Lyallpur while market organisation and practices were not encouraging for cultivators, nevertheless, they

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225. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.90

226. PPBECR, ev. Vol. I, op.cit., p.279

227. Ibid., p.916

sometimes managed to take advantage of keen competition, prevailing amongst factory owners and exporters. The exporters believed that cotton ginned in their own mills was better than that ginned in local mills and so at times paid a higher price for directly procured cotton - "the zamindars profit by this state of affairs".[228] However Lyallpur was also the most notorious for its pool system whereby, "to avoid competition, the mills at each place combine into a pool to fix prices and conditions...."[229] The problem was accentuated by the fact that the roads connected villages with mandis but not mandis with one another so that "the owner cannot conveniently take it elsewhere, as all the local factories are in combination and the next mandi is hard to reach".[230]

Some of the problems of cotton marketing were discussed in 1917 at a conference held in Lyallpur. Here, it was concluded that cultivators did not generally get a fair price for their cotton crop; that variation in cotton price was great between mandis and it almost seemed that they did not conform to any standard; that the problem of lack of storage facilities accentuated the

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228. Ibid., p.1108

229. ICC, ev., vol IV pt.1, 1920, p.65

cultivators problems since "the ginning factory owners are the only people who have storage accommodation for cotton, and this gives them a great advantage in dealing with zamindars; the setting up of large cotton mandis with storage facilities for cultivators use was suggested to encourage outsiders to transact both sales and purchases.[231]

The organisation of market and the process of effecting sales was not conducive to quality cropping, for, no matter how careful the cultivator was, methods adopted in the process of sale, acted as disincentives, if anything. Thus while the exporting firms complained of admixture in grains, the producer found himself getting no higher price for better quality. The wheat enquiry found that the practice of Dārā sales, i.e., sale of heaps of varying qualities at a flat rate which buyers adopted to push through sales rather than spend time evaluating each heap separately - worked out badly for the seller since it went against proper evaluation of superior quality crop. But except in the smaller markets, elimination of dārā sales seemed implausible.[232]

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231. Ibid.

232. BEIP. Pub 39, op.cit., p-32

It was clear that apart from the operation of defects in the processes of cultivation, threshing, winnowing sifting and storage, the middleman was largely responsible for the deliberate introduction of impurities in the wheat exported. In addition to this the attitude of the English corn dealers, who refused to pay a higher price for clean wheat, was also responsible for systematic adulteration of otherwise good quality wheat.[233]

In the case of cotton it was similarly found that American and desi cottons were deliberately mixed in the factories of the province. While the mill owners were anxious to obtain pure American cotton, they had no means of ensuring this. The snag, apparently lay not with the producer but somewhere in between the producer and the millowner.[234]

As Colonisation advanced, different levels of market activity could be seen. These were separate from the traditional market facilities available to villagers in the form of itinerant merchant, hāts or periodic markets and fairs which continued alongside the new forms which

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233. Comm. Ind. Dept, Comm Trade Br., Sept. 1905 A, Pro-1, F-37, p-311.

234. Rev. Agri.Rev., Oct. 1917, A, Pro.18, F-37

came up as commerce developed. The importance of these especially fairs, can by no means be undermined. The Multan gazetteer listed 13 fairs held annually in different places, while the importance of annual horse fairs was emphasised by the Shahpur Gazetteer.[235] Firstly there was the primary village market, which consisted of village shopkeepers, usually settlers from outside the village. These indulged in sale and purchase opening shop once or twice a week, except during the harvest season when thes shop was opened daily. Purchases made from them were on credit and ordinarily, accounts were cleared four times a year, by sale of cotton, toriā, gur, gram, wheat and ghi. It appears that since the villagers were generally keen on continuation of credit facilities, it did not pay them to quarrel with the dealers even though they were vaguely aware that they were losing badly in the exchange.[236]

Next there was the secondary level market - the nearby mandi in the provincial towns, which bealt with daily arrivals of produce. This level of market activity saw rapid developments in the Colonies. As railway communication expanded, mandis, specifically grain mandis,

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235. D.G. Multan., D.G. Shahpur

236. BEIP, PVS, 6, p. 147.

were set up in all Colonies. Though privately owned sometimes they were generally run by the district board administration. By the 1930s, Lyallpur, Chiniot Road, Sangla, Gojra, Chuharkhana, Marh, Abbaspur, Jaranwala, Chichote, Shah Jiwana, Jhang, Rustom Sargana, Pattok, Multan, Khanewal Montgomery, Okara and Pakpattan ahad come up as big marketing centres, where almost none existed before. In Montgomery for instance, there was no mandi before colonisation spread. Produce destined for other mandis often passed through Okara - but Okara mandi itself was formally opened only in 1915, when the Lower Bari Doab Canal began functioning. Similarly, Chichawatni, later a big mandi, was almost waste before the canal opened, consisting of only a few kachha shops around a railway station. In Arifwala, the mandi was opened only in 1927.

Beyond these mandis, were the terminal markets, which handled ready deals and also dealt in 'futures' marketing. At these both export and import transactions were formalised, with exchange being organised through large trading houses. These big marketing centres also opened the way for a whole set of specialised, professional middlemen, who formed a chain in the process of reaching produce to the port. There were the commission

agents, the dalāls, the artiās. These in turn had their own establishments, associations and even assistants.

Thus where cultivators did not themselves market their crop, middlemen, who were ghumars (kumhars) and telis played an important part in assembling produce. Their strength lay in the fact that they were usually in possession of donkeys and bullocks, which they used to transport produce to the markets. The wheat enquiry found this type of trade "particularly active when wheat rates are on the rise."[237]

The artiās dominated the mandi. While some argued that the artiā was only a go-between who acted impartially between his clients, the fact was that with no authority above him, he managed to get the best of the bargain. While buyers sometimes managed to minimise underhand means artiās employed against them by moving together - as was the case in the big mandis at Lyallpur, Gojra, Sangla, Jaranwala, Okara and Sargodha - the sellers had no protection from the cunning ways of artiās. Amongst the artiās, there was further specialisation, so to say, with kachchā artiās acting for the seller, paccā artiās acting for the buyer, and kachchā - paccā artiās acting for both. These usually ended up having considerable amount of money locked in transactions, since they usually paid sellers on the spot. Often the paccā artiā, acting on behalf of export firms in

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237 BEIP, Pub. 38, op.cit., p. 129.

towns and cities, effected purchases through the kachchā artiā. That their business flourished in the years of increasing commerce and trade can be guaged from the fact that the wheat enquiry counted 1,781 artiās in 42 markets out of 117 covered, in the Punjab. The artiās sometimes took the further help of dalāls, who acted as go-betweens for commission agents. The dalāls, however, had no shop, invested no capital and handled no goods themselves.[238]

The export from Karachi was carried out by big exporting houses who had agents and sub-agents all over the main wheat - selling areas. The various mandis drew produce from surrounding villages, despatched wheat to Karachi through these agents, and by the 1920s, even the smallest railway station was caught up in this network. At the stations where the grain was bought, 90 per cent of the price was paid by the firms against a railway receipt, while the remainder was paid on evaluation of grain for cleanliness etc., on arrival at Karachi.[239]

The export trade was almost entirely in the hands of foreign export houses, who dealt with the Imperial Bank of India, while Indians who wished to enter the trade, were hampered at the outset by the absence of an Indian Overseas Bank. It may be noted that 11 per cent of the Imperial

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238 BEIP, Pub. 39, op.cit., p. 31.

239 Roberts and O.T. Faulkner, A Text Book of Punjab Agriculture, 1921, p. 109.

Bank of India's 167 branches were in Punjab.[240] The Bank had 18 branches, 1 sub-agency, 8 pay offices and 34 out-stations in the Province, of these the out-stations were a useful means of developing business since they were set-up with the specific object of tapping possibilities of a new producing area, where advances could be negotiated against produce.

In general the European exporting firms did not finance the ryots by advancing against a future crop. The scope for these firms holding up stocks was limited, as per representatives of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. For, it was Indian middlemen who held stocks in about 40 centres where the principal European firms had their agencies. It may be recalled that Indian firms almost never exported direct to Europe.[241]

The nature of the trade, with heavy emphasis on exports involving forward buying on a large scale, and necessitating the direct intervention of big agency houses, a series of middlemen and so on, as well as the fact that in the first two decades of the twentieth century, an overwhelming aspect of the entire process was the fact of rising prices, especially rise in foodgrain prices. This added other dimensions to the trade. One such feature was the

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240 BECR, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 9.

241 Ibid.

increasing speculation, most noticeable in the grain market in the early years of the war.

In his oral evidence before the Banking Enquiry, Sardar Bahadur H. Singh of Sargodha recalled that when he started business "it was a genuine business", but during the war years it was "changed into a speculative business altogether".[242] While the big firms of good standing stopped speculation after some failures, it was "adopted by the sattā and golā shops". He also felt that due to special conditions during the war, when trade restrictions were imposed by government, "only speculation was left to the people".[243] This tendency of increasing speculation, he felt, worked largely against the producer, for, in a situation of speculative buying and selling, the unity between the markets outside and the local market was broken, making slimmer the chances of the producers selling at market rates - for, if "people in Karachi want to buy at Sargodha, the stock in store will be despatched".[244]

Due to the particular form of market organisation and market practices that cultivators encountered, the move to set-up co-operative commission shops or sale societies found favour amongst the cultivator. Infact, this particular branch of the co-operative movement developed to a

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242 Comm. Ind/Comm. Trade Br., February 1915, A Pro , F. 226 of 1914 Conf. War.

greater extent in the Punjab than elsewhere. In 1935, there were 21 shops at 21 markets, of which 17 were located in the Canal Colony districts of Lyallpur, Montgomery, Shahpur, Multan, Sheikhupura and Gujranwala. The first of these shops was in fact registered at Lyallpur in 1919, under the Co-operative Societies Act, 1912. While, members consisted of landlords, owners, cultivators, mortgagees or lease holders, altogether only 3,313 individuals and 1,100 societies were enrolled as members affiliated to the 21 commission shops, and "the extent to which they availed themselves of the facilities offered was infinitesimal".[245]

Thus in Lyallpur district, where all markets had a co-operative shop, in the course of an enquiry it was found that of 911 cultivators questioned while returning after sales in these markets, only 91 had sold through the co-operative shop, while 820 had sold through artiās even though only 26 of these had taken advances from the artiā.[246]

In Montgomery, the Okara Zamindars' Co-operative Sales Society Limited, Okara, boasted greater success - claiming that about 14 per cent of the total wheat produced in the area surveyed by the Okara market passed

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245 BEIP, Pub. 38, p. 130.

246 BEIP, Pub. 38, p. 58.

through the Society in a single year, - 1934-35 for which figures were available.[247]

Conclusions:

The cropping pattern that emerged in the Canal Colonies, subsequent to Canal irrigation marked a predominance of the Rabi harvest over the Kharif; at the same time two crops, wheat and cotton emerged as the two major crops in the economy. The cropping pattern as well as Canal-irrigation itself contributed to a shift in the life and pattern of the peasant who now had to devote a greater position of his time spread over a longer span in the year to agricultural activity. These changes while on the one hand resulting in a higher yield per acre as compared to non-irrigated tracts, do not seem to have led to a markedly progressive increase in productivity of land over the years. The growth of specialised and commercialised crops, marked important changes in the economy. Over the years, the rapid pace of commercialisation, linked with a situation of rising prices, resulted in this region contributing a large share of the produce for export. These years saw the rise of Karachi as the major port through which exports of wheat were channelised. Along with this there occurred a rapid integration of the region with the world market. This, while on the one hand rais-

247 BEIP, Pub. 38, p. 131.

ing possibilities of benefit from prices, also exposed the region fully to the vicissitudes of the international market. These years also saw a rapid development of communications in the region. While the railways proceeded at a steady pace from 1900 onwards, linking the interior towns with the port, internal road communication took over two decades to develop, greatly hampering the peasant's opportunity to benefit from rising prices. Meanwhile, the nature of West Punjab's integration with the world economy, and to that extent its disjunction from the regional economy of the Province had serious consequences that we have outlined. The discriminatory interventionist policy of the state with regard to prices and export, best illustrated by the 'Wheat Scheme' implemented at the time of the First World War further obstructed the average cultivator's chances of benefitting from the price situation. Along with trade policy, the structure of market organisation, and market practices too acted against the small peasant. The tremendous influence wielded by the commercial classes, not only in the mandis but in terms of control over the entire trade in this region struck awe in the minds of small peasants who often preferred the village shopkeeper to selling in the market; the proportion of sales in the village depended on the crop being sold; cotton for instance was generally sold in the village. But even when selling in the village, cultivators

tried to keep themselves apprised of the mandi price. Whether he obtained anything approximating this depended on a series of other factors - the nature of harvest, the price prevailing, the amount of crop to be sold and the timing of the sale, the social standing of the seller in terms of his status as a proprietor as well as whether he was indebted or not. These affected different cultivators with varying strength. While the big landholders were definitely in a position to enjoy some gains from the rapid commercialisation it is unlikely that small peasants found theselves in a similar position. Thus as we have shown above, while integration of the agriculturist into the market becomes in these years a generalised phenomenon one should also bear in mind the specificities of the modalities of that integration in the different strata of the peasantry.

CHAPTER V

PROPRIETORS AND TENANTS

Having discussed the network of cropping, market relations, trade policy and the cultivators' relationship with this, we turn to the impact these developments had on the economic and social status of the peasantry. In this chapter we discuss these in the context of emerging power relations and social tensions as reflected in the pattern of tenancy and rent in the Canal Colonies. Did tenancy decline over the years? If not, then what was the trend vis-a-vis rents, both, their form and quantum? Was it merely a question of some cultivators leasing in and others leasing out, or did these reflect social differentiation and increase in the same? Was the tenant in the Colonies the replica of the impoverished indebted peasant, a victim of dual exploitation by the landlord and moneylenders? Or, was Punjab different, presenting a contrast to the tenant and under-tenant of Bengal reeling under the semi-feudal exploitation of the 'jotedar'?

While examining the trends regarding tenancy in the Canal Colonies it may be useful to note that in Punjab this question had been discussed for many decades now, specifically in the context of agrarian legislation sought to be enacted by Lawrence and others. Needless to say that this discussion touched upon issues central to the paternalist

thought of the Punjab school of administration. The position taken by Lawrence and his supporters in the course of lengthy discussions and debates on these and related issues, gave rise to two notions regarding the tenancy question in Punjab. Firstly, that owing largely to the thrust of official policy, Punjab emerged in the course of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a land of peasant proprietors who cultivated small and medium holdings through their own industry and resources with landlordism never existing in as rampant and ravaging a form as in other parts of British India. Secondly, that tenants in Punjab enjoyed security of rights legally enshrined in the Punjab Tenancy Act, 1868, with subsequent amendments and back-up legislation, the most significant of these being the Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1901. We do not wish to prove or disprove the validity of these notions here, but only to examine the extent to which the situation in the Canal Colonies corresponded to these generalities.

I Land of Peasant Proprietors:

Table 5.1 give some basic statistics regarding land under owner and tenant cultivation in the Canal Colony districts. The first point that emerges from Table 5.1 is that except for some years in Lyallpur district, owner-cultivated area in none of these districts exceeded 50 per cent of total cultivated area. Correspondingly tenant-cultivated area did

TABLE 5.1

SHOWING AREA CULTIVATED BY OWNERS AND TENANTS

(for quinquennial ending, in percentage)

	Area cultivated by owners, as % of total cultivated		Areas as % of total cultivated under tenants	
Years	No. of holdings	Area cultivated	No. of holdings	Area cultivated
JHANG				
1902	24.4	29.8	74.7	70.0
1907	37.1	43.8	60.4	55.6
1912	34.8	39.0	63.4	60.4
1917	31.7	33.5	65.6	65.8
1922	31.7	34.2	65.8	64.9
MONTGOMERY				
1902	14.3	18.0	84.5	81.3
1907	17.2	21.0	81.6	78.6
1912	18.9	23.1	79.5	76.6
1917	26.7	34.5	71.6	65.1
1922	26.3	20.0	66.6	79.3
SHAHPUR				
1902	45.1	49.1	51.7	49.8
1907	44.1	50.9	53.0	53.8
1912	35.0	38.7	63.1	60.7
1917	36.8	44.9	56.9	53.9
1922	33.6	37.7	60.4	60.8

Cont'd.. Table 5.1

Years	Area cultivated by owners, as % of total cultivated		Areas as % of total cultivated under tenants	
	No. of holdings	No. of cultivated	No. of holdings	Area cultivated
GUJRANWALA				
1902	29.7	41.4	65.4	57.3
1907	29.1	45.0	66.6	54.2
1912	30.9	34.1	65.8	65.0
1917	29.6	38.2	67.4	67.2
1922	27.8	36.9	68.8	62.2
LYALLPUR				
1902	42.3	56.2	57.5	43.7
1907	41.4	52.8	58.4	47.1
1917	40.0	48.8	59.8	51.1
1922	43.2	51.5	56.6	48.3
MULTAN				
1902	28.2	24.5	70.1	75.2
1907	24.9	20.1	74.6	78.9
1912	24.8	19.4	74.9	80.6
1917	29.8	27.0	69.9	72.9
1922	29.8	25.2	66.1	74.4
LAHORE				
1902	32.6	40.9	59.3	57.5
1907	33.2	43.0	57.9	54.2
1912	36.5	40.9	57.7	57.5
1917	34.1	42.1	56.2	56.1
1922	35.6	42.3	55.8	55.7
SHEIKHPURA				
1922	29.8	35.3	65.4	63.8

Source : LRARP, Relevant years, Statement II.

not fall below the 50 per cent mark except in Lyallpur district for some of the years.

Secondly, Jhang, Montgomery and Multan, started off with a very high proportion of land being tenant-cultivated - of these Jhang and Montgomery registered a decline in area under tenant cultivation during this period. This seems to be related to other factors than representative of an actual decline in tenancy. Thus Jhang district recorded during these years a decline in total cultivated area of almost 40 per cent, which was largely due to the transfer of large portions of this district to Lyallpur when the new district was formed in 1904. In fact, tenant-cultivated area which came down from 70 per cent to 55 per cent gradually went up again in subsequent years. The case of Montgomery was different for this was a region where tenancy faced a challenge for many years - tenants being lured away to the Canal Colony lands. The subsequent Colonisation of this district also perhaps bolstered owner-cultivation for a short while. Of the other districts only Lahore, which in any case was more a part of Central Punjab than the Colony tracts, maintained a steady position, though here too a marginal shift in favour of tenant cultivation occurred in later years. In Shahpur, Lyallpur and Gujranwala there was a fairly consistent decline in owner cultivated area and a corresponding increase in area under tenant cultivation. The general trend seems to have been one of increase in area under tenant-cultivation. Sub-

sequent reports, mainly for Lyallpur district and parts of Lahore though, talk of a slight shift in favour of Khudkasht in and after the depression years.

Tenant cultivation, it must be noted, was not a phenomenon new to the Colony tracts. A high proportion of the sparsely populated lands of this region was under tenant-cultivation even in the pre-Colonisation period. This seems surprising at first but the large size of owners' holdings in the early period made tenant-cultivation both necessary and significant - for, given a low technological level, few could themselves cultivate all the land in their possession. Further, the labour and resources involved in well-cultivation itself imposed restrictions on the size of operational holdings so that landowners found upkeep of wells and recovery of initial and recurring expenditure on them easier through leasing out to tenants.[1] Due to the uncertainty of cultivation in these years, dependence on natural factors such as rainfall, inundation was more and districts showed remarkable internal variation due to such natural factors. In Montgomery for instance, 56 per cent of the land in Montgomery tahsil, 65 per cent in Gugera tahsil and 73 per cent in Pakpattan tahsil was tenant-cultivated.[2] In Jhang atleast half the land was tenant-cultivated as early as the 1880s.[3] In both

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1 S.R. Montgomery, 1892-99, op.cit., p. 28.

2 Ibid.

3 S.R. Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p. 106.

these districts, the precariousness of cultivation added an element of uncertainty to the tenancy since prompted by the failure of sailab or in seasons of scarcity, tenants migrated to more favourable tracts.[4]

At the same time, many who were returned as owner-cultivators were often only proprietors, shown as self-cultivating but who "do not actually do the work of husbandry with their own hands".[5] In Montgomery such lands were cultivated by 'adhjogiāns' or 'Lichaiān', who were more akin to labourers, paid at daily wages either in cash on grain usually getting half of what a tenant would have taken.[6]

We may point out here that at times the picture presented in the settlement reports was contrary to what emerges from the quinquennial statement, or, shall we say that the statistics for 1902-22 do not always convey the long-term trend. Thus the Multan settlement report noted that owner-cultivated land had gone down from 45 per cent in 1901 to 26 per cent in 1921 while the proportion land held by tenants-at-will had increased to 71 per cent.[7] In Lahore the owner-cultivated area had come down from 60 per cent in the 1860s to 44 per cent in the 1930s though the Settlement Report

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4 Ibid.

5 A.R. Gugera, 1894, op.cit., para 90.

6 Ibid.

7 S.R. Multan, 1921, op.cit., p. 7.

claimed that Lahore continued to be a district of "small farmers cultivating with their own hands."[8] Also, in Lahore, the area under occupancy tenants registered a marginal decline while that held by tenants-at-will increased considerably.[9] However, in the newly-formed Sheikhupura district, 60 per cent of the cultivated area was returned as owner-cultivated.[10] In Jhelum too, in 1904, approximately 55 per cent of the land was owner-cultivated.[11] In Shahpur, tenants-at-will cultivated 58 per cent of the area in 1917 and in the Lower Jhelum Colony only 33 per cent land was owner-cultivated in 1926.[12] While the settlement reports show the trends over a long period and include as well, the non-canal-irrigated tracts in the Colony districts, the assessment reports for the respective circles on the Lower Chenab Canal reflect the same trend. Thus, on Jhang Branch II, area leased out to tenants in 1908-9, amounted to 43 per cent; on Gugera Branch II, the proportion held by tenants-at-will was 47 per cent by 1910-11; and on the Rakh Branch, supposedly the most prosperious in the Colony, the area leased out continued to increase for, "a tendency to reduce the area of self-cultivation was the first sign of affluence."[13] However, in one

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8 S.R., Lahore, 1939, op.cit., p. 4.

9 Ibid.

10 S.R., Sheikhupura, 1926, p. 21.

11 D.G., Jhelum, 1904, op.cit., p. 233.

12 D.G., Shahpur, 1917, op.cit., p. 204; S.R., Shahpur, 1926, pp. 6-7.

13 A.R., Jhang Branch II, 1911; A.R., Gugera Branch II,

village on the Mian Ali Branch, Khudkāsht recorded was as high as 93 per cent and only in 7 villages, was the figure below 60 per cent.[14]

Thus, till about the mid-1920s, for which period details are available, the trend seems to have been one of increase in area under tenant cultivation. This was true even of a prosperous district like Lyallpur.

The 1921 Census, in fact, was not too far off the mark when it observed that by the second decade of the twentieth century, there was an increasing tendency for Punjab to become a country of petty landlords living on rent.[15] Calvert, while not refuting this, added two other points, based more on observations in Lyallpur district. Firstly, he found owners being tempted by high profits to resume land formerly given to tenants and undertake self-cultivation and, secondly, a demand for more land by tenants - also for the same reasons perhaps.[16] In any case Calvert's observation that owners were being tempted to resume land previously leased out, even if true for a section of the owners, still does not prove that the general trend towards increase in tenancy was in any way checked, leave alone reversed. In our evidence it is only in the course of the depression years that this tendency was

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Cont'd.. f.n. 13
1912, para 17; A.R., Rakh Branch, 1913, para 27.

14 Rev. Agri. Rev., January 1915, A, Pro-38, F-7.

15 Census, Punjab, Report, 1921, p. 354.

16 Calvert, 1922, op.cit., p. 239.

visible, and that too in parts of Lyallpur district when the overall figures for Khudkasht in the district registered an increase from 51 per cent to 54 per cent between 1923-24 and 1932-33.[17]

Calvert's second observation, however, that there was an increasing demand for land on lease, was however very true for Lyallpur, and in parts, for other districts as well. Contrary to reports from several districts like Multan etc., in Lyallpur there was clearly "no difficulty in obtaining tenants; in fact it is the other way round; the tenants experience difficulty in getting as much land as they want for cultivation."[18] It was added that sometimes the shortage resulted in tenants taking land on lease in other villages. At the same time it may be pointed out shortage of tenants' experienced in other districts too, was, a relative phenomenon. Thus in Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, while there was no problem in finding tenants for good land - "indeed for such land the demand seems always greater than the supply" - for poorer quality maira lands, tenants could be obtained only with difficulty since cultivation of these lands was found to be "unremunerative."[19]

What Calvert and others were pointing to was no doubt correct to an extent: that tenancy did not imply, per se,

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17 S.R., Lyallpur, 1924, op.cit., p. 13, and S.R.,Lyallpur, 1941, op.cit., p. 10.

18 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 106.

19. BEIP, PVS. 6. op. cit.,p. 160

poverty and dispossession, i.e., that tenancy could also stem from a desire on the part of middle-rank peasants, to take additional land on lease and thereby earn a 'profit' on cultivation.

This merits attention. Since all tenants were obviously not in the same category, to club them together would be disastrous. The distinction at this point was not so much relating to juridical status and rights, viz., whether they were occupancy tenants or tenants-at-will etc. but one of the standing and vulnerability of the tenant concerned. Thus while some were tenants, "pure and simple", others were owner-cultivators in their own right, who were only taking additional land on rent to cultivate. The Kala Gaddi Thamman village survey clarifies this - of 59 tenants, 28 were only tenants while 31 were owners and tenants. The former had leased in 158.6 acres while the latter had taken 99.4 acres in addition to what they already owned.[20] All were, however, tenants-at-will in so far as the tenancy contract was concerned. Yet, there can be no doubt as to the fact that owner-tenants were far more advantageously placed than the pure tenants. In fact, even in comparatively less prosperous villages, 'land hunger' drove small owners to lease in land, at times in neighbouring villages, "to supplement their own small holdings."[21] In Khushab, Shahpur, too, "few villages had any con-

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20 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 61.

21 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 160.

siderable members who were tenants only, with no land of their own."[22]

We have seen that tenancy was in fact not a new feature for the "land of peasant proprietors." That a fairly large portion of the cultivated area had been under tenancy cultivation since the mid-19th century atleast. The tendency towards tenancy cultivation did, nevertheless get a boost in the initial stages of Colonisation with many of the allottees resorting to it in order to get their lands cleared. Often the initial hardships in the transitional period of Colonisation were borne by 'poor relatives', sent out on seemingly attractive terms by the actual grantees who continued to reside in old villages. Most of these were, however, only too eager to resume control of the allotments once the initial job had been done by others. The relatives who were earlier perhaps, cultivating on revenue rates, now looked to other proprietors for land on lease having no option but to stay on in the Colonies as there was nothing to pull them back to their original homes. Over the years, as Colonisation and cultivation advanced, the returns for cultivation by tenants at revenue rates showed a decline in almost all the districts, but more so in the more 'prosperous' districts, where the attraction to take over cultivation or lease out on more profitable terms was stronger. On the Upper Jhang Branch the settlement officer found that having had the land levelled

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22 A.R., Khushab, Shahpur, 1915, op.cit., para 47.

and cleared by tenants, landlords turned to the paying line of self-cultivation.

Thus on the Rakh Branch, in the early years, even in peasant mauzās there was a tendency to make over inferior or, in the case of large grants, superfluous land to relatives on easy terms. It was found that in Arain villages, "the richer members of the community are usually generous enough". It was otherwise in the case of Sikhs, who had a "keen eye to profit and generally make a good bargain even with their co-religionists."[23]

Who else leased out land? As has been pointed out earlier capitalist grantees, auction purchasers, and even yeoman grantees, generally assumed the role of "absentee landlords," much to the disappointment of the government which had placed great hopes in them.

Amongst others mentioned as rent receivers, in the reports, widows were a permanent feature, though their number varied. Widows infact generally found mention alongwith the old and the infirm, who too were compelled to resort to leasing out land. Often, widows leased out land at lower batai rates to relatives etc., foregoing economic benefit in lieu of promised security of ownership.

Non-agriculturist moneylenders formed throughout the region a major portion of the rent-receivers. The tenancy contracts being, in such cases, an extension of the debt-

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23 A.R., Rakh Branch, Lower Chenab Colony, 1913, op.cit., para 27.

mortgage transaction. These, infact, combined their money-lending operations with commercial activity in close co-ordination with arhtiās, thereby ensuring benefit from rising prices. There is evidence, however, which suggests that in many parts, professional moneylenders were being replaced by agriculturist moneylenders who usually preferred usufructuary mortgage, which allowed them to cultivate a larger portion of the land and benefit from sale of produce.

II Rent Form and Rent Rate:

The rent form in these districts seems to have followed a familiar pattern. While early reports indicate the prevalence of numerous forms of rents and tenures, by the twentieth century a level of uniformity was emerging as far as the rent form was concerned. For most of the period under study, two basic forms remained the most prevalent, kind rent and cash rent. At best, in some regions a mixed form, close to chakotā, prevailed. While this represented an advance in terms of simplification of tenure as well as rent demand, whether it was in favour of the tenant remains doubtful. Though, some of the transitory forms, recorded in the early settlement reports, lacking rigidity, left the door open for the tenant to turn the situation in his favour, other circumstances permitting. This seems to have been the case in Jhang, Jhelum, Gujranwala and even Multan districts.[24]

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24 The taraddadgari was one such tenure common in the upland villages of Jhang. Under this, a tenant agreed to cultivate the owners land on condition that in addi-

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As the shift to batai came about, initially rates of batai differed - eg., one-third, two-fifths half and so on. As Colonisation proceeded, it became clear that the prevailing rent on canal lands was half - batai. As mentioned earlier, land leased on revenue rates registered a notable decline after the initial years of Colonisation. Meanwhile, area under cash rents began to register a gradual increase once again from about 1910 onwards, although it was still only a very small portion of total land leased out. It may be pointed out that cash rents, far from being unknown in the years prior to Colonisation, were, in fact, fairly common in some districts.

Gujranwala, for instance, attracted official attention in the 1880s, when it was found that though in some of the adjoining districts, cash rents were practically unknown, in this district they were widely prevalent. This 'peculiarity', as the officials then saw it, was due more to the fact that landlords found it 'more convenient to make the tenants pay cash assessment than to exact a share of the

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Cont'd.. f.n. 24

tion to his share, he receive half the owners share also, for which he paid 1/2 the land revenue. In extreme terms favourable to the tenant, the lessor was practically owner of half and occupancy tenant of the other half of the land, while at the other extreme. Landlord enjoyed a virtually unchecked right to terminate the tenancy at his will. However, lacking uniformity and permanence, the tenure varied, according to the relative strength of the tenant vis-a-vis the

crop', than to a desire for a higher margin of profit.[25] Cash rents of two kinds - a) based on an average rate and b) a lump-sum payment on well lands - were paid by tenants-at-will on 40 per cent of the cultivated area in Gujranwala tahsil, on 31 per cent in Wazirabad and 25 per cent in Hafizabad. While cash rents seemed common on "inferior land" at this time, unlike in the later period, on the best lands chakotā rents were taken.[26]

Canal-irrigation changed much of this so that by 1913 there was an increase in lands paying mixed cash and grain rents; increase in area under kind rents and, a decline in area under cash rents.[27] By 1927, "kind rents were popular in all tahsils owing to price rise" and, next preference as far as landlords were concerned, was chakotā rents.[28] While the process of switching from one form of rent to another was on, that it was a slow one is confirmed by the village survey for Gajju Chak where, till the 1930s, share rents were still not in vogue, and only 8.7 per cent of the cultivated area was leased on batai. The report, noting a distinct preference, on the part of owners in the village, for mixed rents, identified three reasons for this: a) the value of share or fixed grain in addition to cash rents tended to exceed the cash rents; b) those landowners who

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25 S.R., Gujranwala, 1889-94, p. 55.

26 Ibid., p. 57.

27 S.R., Gujranwala, 1913, p. 23.

28 S.R., Gujranwala, 1927.

possessed more cattle than they had fodder for, saved on cost of buying fodder and c) non-cultivating landowners secured for themselves green produce, maize and vegetable crops on a share basis. Tenants, meanwhile accepted the arrangement because good, secure land was generally not available on a pure cash rent basis, and it suited them, at times, to make some initial payments in kind rather than immediately convert the produce into cash.[29] In such transactions, the rabi rent was paid in kind, while for kharif crops cash rents were preferred since these crops were "particularly profitable", and, in addition, required greater labour in ploughing weeding and watering. Mixed rents were particularly welcomed by tenants if they obtained long leases, of says 5 or 10 years, though these were generally given only for poor lands.[30]

In Sharakpur, Gujranwala, where a large increase in nahri and barani lands cultivated by tenants-at-will had occurred, there was a corresponding increase in batai cultivation in all circles of the tahsil. It was estimated that kind rents were paid on approximately 79 per cent of the land held by tenants-at-will in the tahsil. Cash rents were important only on well-irrigated lands.[31]

In Lahore too, cash rents were paid on as large an area as 153,856 acres in the 1860s, as compared to 182,995 acres on

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29 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 162.

30 Ibid.

31 A.R., Sharakpur, Gujranwala, op.cit., p. 17.

produce rents, but the situation had changed by the 1890s when only 12 per cent of the land leased by tenants-at-will was on cash rent. By 1935, this had further come down to 8 per cent. Cash rents, in the 1930s were paid on nahri lands, but clearly by this time, produce rents were, "by far, the more popular".[32]

In Montgomery, in the 1890s, Kankut and zabti, were rare, but still to be found, while rent was almost always taken in the form of batai.[33] By 1922, Kankut and zabti had further receded, cash rents were paid on an "insignificant fraction", of the 70 per cent held by tenants-at-will, the rest being all leased on batai.[34] In Multan, batai was the common form of rent appropriation, though between 1880 and 1901, cash rents had gone up from 0.6 per cent to 4.5 per cent.[35] By 1921 though, the area under cash rents had again fallen to 3.9 per cent.[36] The report on the village survey of Durrana Langana found that "since agriculture is beset with calamities over which he has little control", the peasant did not like to run a risk by taking land on cash rents, while the landowners for their part, would not go in for cash rents since by appro-

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32 S.R., Lahore, 1865-69, p. 35; A.R., Lahore, 1939, op. cit., p. 15.

33 S.R., Montgomery, 1892-99, op.cit., p. 28.

34 S.R., Montgomery, 1922, op.cit., p. 5.

35 S.R., Multan, 1901, op.cit., p. 15.

36 S.R.,Multan, 1921, op.cit., p. 7.

priating kind rent they hoped to share in "the profits due to high prices."[37]

In Chunian Colony, in 1915, of the 34 per cent leased out to tenants, 12 per cent was on privileged terms to relations etc., while 22 per cent was leased out on competition' rents. Of this only 3 per cent was on cash terms.[38] By 1939 the area under cash rents had gone upto 19 per cent - the highest ever in the tahsil. However, while to some extent this was related to economic developments, to a much greater extent the shift was due to the fact that most colonists had gone back to their old villages after acquiring proprietory rights, leaving their Colony lands with tenants cultivating on cash terms.[39]

Table 5.2 show that occupancy tenants never formed a sizeable portion of the total tenants in the Canal Colonies, except in Shahpur, Gujranwala and Lahore districts. Further, amongst them the number of holdings leased on cash rents were even fewer.

Table 5.3 is however significant. Along with increase in area held by tenants, area cultivated by tenants-at-will also increased since as is obvious from table 5.2, occupancy tenants hardly occupied a sizeable proportion in any of the districts. Of the land held by tenants-at-will, area leased on kind rent increased in Jhang and Gujranwala alone. In

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37 BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p. 189.

38 A.R., Chunian Colony, 1915, op.cit., para 96.

39 A.R., Chunian Colony, 1939, op.cit., p. 40.

TABLE 5.2

Area held by Occupancy Tenants paying at Different Rates

Year	Area cultivated by tenants free of rent as % of total held by tenants		% of total held by tenants at revenue rates		% of total held by tenants paying cash rents		% of total held by tenants paying in kind	
JHANG	No. of holdings	Area	No. of holdings	Area	No. of holdings	Area	No. of holdings	Area
1902	1.1	0.1	6.6	-	.03	0.07	5.71	12.7
1907	3.9	0.8	.8	1.0	0.03	0.01	2.6	2.3
1912	2.7	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.09	0.04	2.2	1.8
1917	3.9	6.9	2.6	5.9	0.1	0.04	2.0	1.4
1922	3.6	1.4	2.1	3.7	0.03	0.02	1.9	1.5
MONTGOMERY								
1902	1.3	0.6	3.1	1.2	0.02	0.01	2.7	1.9
1907	1.3	0.3	3.2	1.2	0.1	0.08	2.9	2.4
1912	1.8	0.3	3.4	1.2	0.02	0.03	2.8	1.7
1917	2.1	0.4	2.7	1.0	0.02	-	3.2	2.0
1922	10.5	0.8	3.7	1.4	0.06	0.02	2.8	6.7
SHAHPUR								
1902	6.0	1.9	4.5	3.3	0.4	0.3	1.3	1.0
1907	5.4	1.4	4.1	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.6
1912	2.9	1.0	3.8	3.6	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.4
1917	10.9.	1.9	5.8	7.6	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.4
1922	9.6	2.3	8.3	14.6	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.4
GUJRANWALA								
1902	7.3	1.9	6.8	5.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
1907	6.2	1.3	6.2	5.7	6.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
1912	4.8	1.2	9.5	14.2	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.1
1917	4.3	.9	5.8	4.0	0.1	0.09	0.2	0.1
1922	4.7	1.3	7.1	5.8	0.1	0.09	0.1	0.1
LYALLPUR								
1907	0.1.	0.01	-	-	-	-	-	-
1912	2.7	1.2	.6	0.01	-	-	0.8	0.03
1917	0.3	0.06	0.3	0.1	.001	0.01	0.1	0.03
1922	0.09	0.1	0.1	0.02	-	-	0.01	-
MULTAN								
1902	0.1	0.3	1.0	0.9	0.1	0.04	1.7	1.7
1907	0.44	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.05	0.03	1.64	1.5
1912	0.2	0.04	1.4	1.7	0.01	0.02	1.5	1.2
1917	0.3	0.05	1.9	2.69	0.01	0.01	1.5	1.28
1922	4.17	0.4	2.6	3.5	0.01	0.01	1.29	1.14
LAHORE								
1902	8.0	1.62	6.5	5.9	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.75
1907	8.9	2.76	6.8	6.8	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.7
1912	5.9	1.5	8.2	9.5	0.5	0.37	0.7	0.6
1917	9.7	1.8	7.7	8.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.7
1922	8.6	1.97	8.0	7.4	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.6
SHEIKHUPURA								
1922	4.8	0.9	3.1	2.9	0.1	0.09	0.1	0.06

Source: LRAHP, Relevant Years, Statement II.

TABLE 5.3

Area held by Tenants without rights of Occupancy, Paying at different rates

	Year	% of total held by tenants at revenue rates		% of total hold by tenants paying cash rents		% of total hold by tenants paying in kind	
		No. of holdings	Area	No. of Holdings	Area	No. of holdings	Area
JHANG	1902	10.2	17.9	0.6	0.5	76.6	52.7
	1907	2.0	1.9	0.5	0.7	93.8	93.8
	1912	3.0	2.9	2.6	4.0	91.0	90.1
	1917	3.3	3.0	3.5	6.0	88.2	83.4
	1922	5.1	3.9	7.2	11.1	83.4	79.6
MONT-GOMERY	1902	2.8	1.4	6.6	0.4	90.5	94.9
	1907	3.1	1.2	0.6	0.5	90.0	94.4
	1912	2.7	0.7	0.7	0.5	90.2	95.7
	1917	3.2	1.6	0.9	0.7	89.8	94.5
	1922	6.5	3.5	3.4	2.4	83.4	91.8
GUJRAN-WALA	1902	14.2	12.4	18.5	22.1	59.9	59.8
	1907	16.9	12.8	18.4	20.6	57.9	60.5
	1912	13.9	9.5	15.0	16.7	61.0	59.2
	1917	14.8	9.2	11.6	18.5	67.3	67.9
	1922	14.5	10.0	10.1	11.2	67.7	69.6
LYALL-PUR	1907	11.6	6.8	4.0	6.2	84.2	86.9
	1912	13.4	8.6	10.4	15.4	75.9	75.8
	1917	13.4	11.0	16.4	23.4	69.7	65.3
	1922	14.7	8.9	22.3	30.6	62.6	60.4
SHAH-PUR	1902	8.4	5.2	1.8	1.9	89.2	98.2
	1907	6.1	2.7	1.4	2.3	87.2	81.6
	1912	9.9	9.6	1.7	2.0	88.7	84.1
	1917	12.6	10.1	4.2	5.0	76.5	76.6
	1922	10.0	7.0	5.7	7.2	75.0	70.3
MULTAN	1902	0.04	1.8	2.1	2.7	63.9	68.3
	1907	1.3	0.8	2.2	3.1	68.5	72.9
	1912	1.5	1.2	2.9	3.9	67.1	72.5
	1917	1.4	1.10	3.4	4.49	61.7	63.28
	1922	4.8	4.5	2.3	3.0	55.1	62.15
LAHORE							
	1902	5.6	7.4	8.6	8.4	37.4	34.6
	1907	3.9	3.9	7.5	7.2	38.3	35.3
	1912	3.9	4.7	7.7	7.06	36.6	35.2
	1917	2.9	3.47	8.2	8.9	36.0	34.5
	1922	2.8	2.7	9.4	10.8	34.3	33.3
SHEIKHPURA							
	1922	8.9	5.8	7.5	14.1	45.6	40.8

Source : LRARP, Relevant years, Statement II.

Jhang, Montgomery, Lyallpur and Shahpur, area leased to tenants-at-will on cash rents registered a sizeable increase while in Multan and Lahore the increase was nominal and Gujranwala, which recorded a large proportion under cash rents at the beginning of the century actually recorded a notable decline. Area held by tenants-at-will paying at revenue rates declined in Jhang, Gujranwala and Lahore, registered a nominal increase in Montgomery and Multan and increased but continued to fluctuate in Lyallpur and Shahpur.

In Shahpur district, whereas in the 1880s, atleast 10 per cent of the tenants-at-will had cultivated on cash terms, by the turn of the century, the situation was different.[40] In Jhelum and Ara circles, cash rents "hardly existed", while in Khushab, "all rents with negligible exception are paid in kind".[41] In 1917, 51 per cent of the 58 per cent held by tenants-at-will was on batai, and only 7 per cent was on cash terms. The Settlement Report added that cash rents, which were "untypical", were found mainly on the Lower Jhelum Canal lands.[42] By 1926, however cash rents were "increasing in popularity", in the district.[43] Whether the depression made any impact on this trend is not known.

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40 S.R., Shahpur, 1887, op.cit., p. 13.

41 Forecast report, Jhelum and Ara circles, 1911, op.cit., A.R., Khusab Shahpur, 1915, op.cit., para 48.

42 D.G., Shahpur, 1917, op.cit., p. 204.

43 S.R., Shahpur, 1926, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

It was on lands irrigated by the Lower Chenab Canal falling in the Jhang and Lyallpur districts that a noticeable shift in the rent form could be observed in the course of the first decade of the twentieth century. Thus on the Upper Jhang Branch, there was an increase in cash rents from 5 per cent to 14 per cent of rented area between 1902-3 and 1908-9.[44] On Jhang Branch II, it was an increase from 5 per cent to 15 per cent in the same period.[45] On Jhang Branch III, the increase was from 5 per cent to 13 per cent between 1904 and 1909.[46] On Gugera Branch I, area leased on cash terms increased from 3 per cent to 14 per cent between 1903 and 1909.[47] Area held on cash terms was perhaps the lowest on Gugera Branch II, where it was only 6 per cent in 1912.[48] On the Rakh Branch, 19 per cent of the area leased out was on cash terms by 1913.[49]

This increase in area cash rented was to a large extent accounted for by the fact that at the beginning of the Colonisation program, a very large area was kept aside for allotments on capitalist and yeomen terms to Central Punjab gran-

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44 A.R., Upper Jhang Branch, 1911, op.cit., para 12.

45 A.R., Jhang Branch II, 1911, op.cit., para 12.

46 A.R., Jhang Branch III, 1911, op.cit., para 7.

47 A.R., Gugera Branch I, 1912, op.cit., para 19.

48 A.R., Gugera Branch II, 1912, op.cit., para 17.

49 A.R., Rakh Branch Circle, 1913, op.cit., para 8.

tees. It was these who preferred to go back to their old villages after leasing out their Colony grants on cash terms which, as we said earlier, were preferred by absentee landlords. The Settlement Officer on the Jhang Branch observed that in this period a low cash rent prevailed, since, "cash rents were looked upon with disfavour as pointing to absenteeism, and there remained a fear of being reported for breach of conditions."[50] It was also felt that area under cash rents "would probably be much larger but for salutary rules, which prohibit tenants of Government from disposing of their land in this way for more than a year at a time."[51] On the Rakh Branch, area leased on cash rent was mostly on auction-purchases, capitalist and yeoman holdings, who were absentee landlords and allowed a free hand to their agents. Sometimes they leased land for a number of years after taking payment in advance.[52]

The fact that much of the land leased on cash rents belonged to capitalist and yeoman grantees often ensured that under-average land was not leased on cash rents. This was the case on the upper Jhang Branch and Jhang Branch II, while on Jhang Branch III and on Gugera Branch I as well, cash rents were found in all classes of villages - the best and the worst.

It appears that apart from convenience for absentee

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50 A.R., Jhang Branch II, 1911, op.cit., para 12.

51 A.R., Gugera Branch II, 1912, op.cit.

52 A.R., Rakh Branch, 1913, op.cit., para 47.

landlords, cash rents were on the increase also because "there was a keen demand for it amongst owner-tenants who preferred taking additional land on cash rent. This keen demand was in fact, responsible for cash rents moving upwards." Owner-tenants, however, still found it worth it to lease in additional land on prevailing high rents for they still hoped to benefit, by growing fodder crops on rented land, whereby they were "able to put a larger area of their own holdings under money-yielding crops."[53]

Table 5.4 below gives comparative index numbers for cash rents and Harvest Prices at Lyallpur from 1913-14 to 1926 as calculated on the basis of a village survey. Lyallpur district, we may recall here, was constituted of the more prosperous tracts of the Lower Chenab Colony, and was also the more closely integrated with the market.

The table shows that till about 1921-22 cash rents on average lands were lower than prices, implying that above average land benefitted more while below average lesser probably had to struggle to break even, leave alone benefit from the transaction. After 1921-22, rents definitely overtook the price index indicating that even above-average land tenants may have had to face a stringent position though if they could command a better price may be they could still ensure better returns from their agricultural activity. This too was perhaps rendered difficult in the depression years, when even in Lyallpur district, the trend in increase

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53 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 109.

TABLE 5.4

COMPARING CASH RENTS AND HARVEST PRICES AT LYALLPUR FROM 1913-14 TO 1926

Year	Class of Land				Harvest Price at Lyallpur				
	High	Medium	Low	Average	Wheat %	Cotton %	Toria %	Gur %	Avg. %
1913-14	9.1	11.2	14.7	100	100	100	100	100	100
1914-15	15.0	11.2	12.4	100	100	100	100	100	100
1915-16	15.0	15.6	14.6	100	100	100	100	100	100
1916-17	15.0	-	14.6	100	100	100	100	100	100
1917-18	15.0	16.6	14.6	116	113	262	78	84	134
1918-19	16.1	16.9	13.6	113	162	316	183	168	207
1919-20	18.3	17.4	14.3	122	143	276	263	195	219
1920-21	25.2	22.2	18.9	159	166	142	160	168	159
1921-22	25.2	28.0	22.2	184	174	145	171	179	167
1922-23	24.6	27.1	22.4	184	121	174	160	105	140
1923-24	-	27.6	26.6	200	121	291	160	105	169
1924-25	-	29.8	-	218	174	274	200	218	216
1925-26	15.5*	30.9	20.0	206	160	181	166	147	163

* At concession rate.

Source : BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., Table LXIV, p. 110.

in area under cash rent was reversed with the onset of the depression. Between 1924 and 1932-33, area under cash rents in the district came down from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, while that on batai went up from 30 per cent to 34 per cent

in the same period.[54] In Lyallpur, the village survey confirmed that kind rent pressed "less heavily" on the tenant during the depression while for the landlord also recovery in kind was not as difficult as in cash.[55]

What emerges from a study of rent patterns and shifts in form of rent etc., is, that apart from the change in form in which rent was appropriated, there was, over time, a clear trend towards increase in quantum appropriated. That obviously was the whole purpose of the exercise as far as landlords were concerned. Table 5.4 below gives in brief some of the statistical information available as to rent rates prevailing. This information, of course, is based on average statistics available at the district level. While these are relevant, we are aware that we also have to examine the specific form in which landlord-tenant relationships evolved. For these differed from region to region and from holding to holding within the same tract. The slightest factor could lead to an increase, or decrease, in the rent rate; a water channel passing through a field or even close by; proximity to a road, or a railway line, distance from a mandi - any of these could raise the rent demand. In addition to this, demographic patterns, digging of a canal in an adjoining district, the customs and traditions of a community or communities residing in the tract - all these affected rent. But what is clear

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54 S.R., Lyallpur, 1924, op.cit., p. 13; S.R., Lyallpur, 1941, p. 10.

55 BEIP,PVS, 4, op.cit., p.

from a study of the various assessment and settlement reports of the period is that there was a general trend in increase in rent rates which was directly related to the process of both Colonisation and commercialisation.

In many districts rents were high at a time when other districts faced a shortage of tenants. In 1880 the Settlement Officer Jhang, observed that "there is not a district in the province where the rate of batai is so high". On sailāb lands in particular, there was no difficulty in procuring tenants; the rate was invariably half-batai, while in in the case of better class sailāb lands, landlords customarily exacted a small fee from the incoming tenant for permission to cultivate.[56]

On well lands on the other hand, half-produce rents were nominal and, with a few exceptions, one-third share was taken. In fact on chāhi lands the tenant could cut "practically as much green wheat and jowar to feed the well bullock as necessary." While there was no limit to this he could also take almost the whole of the turnip crop, with the proprietor taking his share only if the crop or root was sold; "otherwise all that he takes is a marlā or two of green wheat and a bundle or two of his turnips."[57] The tenant of course, made efforts to extort other allowances - on account of the soil, low productivity, water being distant, the well being infe-

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56 S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p. 101.

57 Ibid.

rior, and so on.... Gradually it seems, tension was building up, especially with kirār landlords. The division of bhusā became an issue of conflict. On his part, the landlord was staking claims to a larger share. On canal irrigated lands for instance, it was becoming common for landlords to claim 'kharch', or the basis of 1/8 out of the tenant's share, in addition to his half-share as rent.[58] Generally the landlord paid both abiāna and land revenue, but the settlement report observed that on canal-irrigated lands, customary rates were yet to evolve, and a considerable diversity existed, especially in the liability for water-rates. In the course of settlement operations the following rent arrangements were noted: a) owner takes 1/3 of all crops and pays the land revenue while the tenant pays abiāna; b) owner takes half of all crop, plus a share, 'kharch', out of the tenant's half, frequently 1/8, and pays both land revenue and abiāna; c) the tenant and landlord share the produce half-half as well as the land revenue and abiāna expenses in the same proportion. It was found that while tenants and landlords expressed their preference for (a) and (c) respectively, the second form was the commonest. This was partly because of the landlord who harboured the notion that payment of any portion of government demand by the tenant may weaken his own title, while the tenant entertained the hope that he may be able to exercise elasticity in 'kharch', to his advantage.[59]

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58 S.R., Jhang, 1906, op.cit., p. 22.

59 Ibid.

In Montgomery, the share taken by the landlord varied from one region to another. In tahsil Montgomery itself, the rate for well-irrigated crops was 1/3 in the riverain and in the Bar 1/4, though in some estates where well lands got abundant sailāb also, the rate was one-half. On canal-irrigated lands the prevalent batai rate was 1/3 or 2/5 in Gugera, and 1/4 in Dipalpur and Pakpatten tahsils.[60]

The Settlement Commissioner observed that in Montgomery district, "the tenant can make almost any term he likes," since as a rule it was the landlord who sought a tenant and not the tenant who bid for land.[61] This was attributed partly to the opening of the Chenab Canal for it was hardly attractive for tenants to stay on to cultivate with uncertain sailāb and difficulties of well-cultivation when land on more certain conditions was available. Given the fact that the prosperity of large estates seemed dependent on their ability and success in attracting and keeping tenants, they could bargain for liberal advances in cash or kind, for seed and for loans for personal consumption as well. At times tenants insisted on being allowed to cultivate jwar and other crops freely as fodder for cattle and for domestic purposes, with no rent being paid for such cuttings; and were known to have moved to more favourable tracts, even without repaying advances, in bad seasons. There were instances of landlords paying

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60 S.R., Montgomery, 1892-99, op.cit., p. 28.

61 Ibid., p. 4.

off advances due from incoming tenant to old landlords as well.[62] In one instance, the landlord paid revenue for 109 acres, while he received a produce share for only 69 acres, the remainder being kept for fodder by the tenant. In such circumstances, landlords seldom sued tenants and those who did found themselves boycotted.[63]

Nevertheless, while much of what the Settlement Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner observed may have been true, even in old proprietory villages in Montgomery district, owners were prompted to demand high rents by the prevailing high rent rates on the Lower Bari Doab Canal area.[64]

It was noticed that the announcement of settlement operations generally led to a bid by landlords to enhance rents as well. In Gujranwala, before the 1906 settlement a substantial increase in rents was noticed on a large number of estates.[65] In Gujju Chak village, Gujranwala, while there was no radical change in batai rates, they were "tending to move upwards, more to the advantage of the owner" and in later years area leased at rates higher than 1/3 batai was certainly more than ever before.[66] It appears that half-batai rate was common for cotton and sugarcane but rarely for wheat.

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62 Ibid.

63 LRARP, 1903, p. 2.

64 LRARP, 1920, p. 11.

65 S.R., Gujranwala, 1906, op.cit., p. 36.

66 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 174.

In Multan the extension of canal irrigation on the Sidhnai and elsewhere was enough reason to occasion a 35 per cent to 40 per cent increase in rent.[67] The highest rate of batai was taken on nahri crops, ranging from 1/3 to 1/2 though at times there were different rates for kharif and rabi, while on non-canal but irrigated lands, the common rate was 1/3 batai. By the 1920s, in all circles, the batai rates showed an "appreciable rise", as compared to the previous settlement. Whereas earlier reports had mentioned that in certain areas owners allowed tenants an indefinite share of the 'leavings', ie., the 'talwera' or the 'angani', by the twenties it was common for the landlord to take, apart from the primary batai share, certain extra though minor dues calculated at a definite proportion of the net divisible grain produce offer deduction of nominal dues.[68] In Kabirwala too, there was a trend towards the imposition of 'Zamindari kharch', in addition to the half share. Though, in Mailsi the tenants 'paid occupiers' rate while the landlords were responsible for clearance of the longer water courses or kassis, in Kabirwala the tenants often had to clear the irrigation channels on the Sidhnai. In Kabirwala itself the owners cleared the artificial cuts from rivers in the Utar, and in the Hithar Chenab, tenants who undertook clearance, sometimes paid a low rate of batai and also did not pay abiāna. That there was conflict

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67 S.R., Multan, 1901, op.cit., p. 6.

68 A.R., Mailsi, 1920, op.cit.

on the issue, with both trying to put the responsibility for clearance of channels etc. on to the other, was indicated by the fact that several of the river cuts had been abandoned since last settlement, while on those that remained, clearance was done neither regularly nor thoroughly.[69]

In Shahpur too, it was noted that while on the Thal and other non-canal irrigated lands the rent was 1/3 share of produce, with straw, and it appeared "difficult to find a large number of tenants willing to pay more"; yet by the 1920s rents had risen, including on unirrigated soils.[70] Rents in Colony villages, of course, were "far in excess of those in the old proprietory estates".[71] The difference land and water resources made to rents can be seen from the fact that while poor Sobhaga land was leased at Rs. 3 per acre, on the southern Sargodha branch on an average rents ranged from Rs. 9 to Rs. 14 per acre, even going up to Rs. 25.[72]

In Lahore, the pitch of rents, both in cash and kind, was "appreciably higher" than at last settlement.[73] In the Mānjha circles chakotā rents, were also common, with a fixed amount of grain being paid each year. The settlement report

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69 A.R., Kabirwala, 1920, op.cit.

70 A.R., Khushab, 1915, op.cit., para 48.

71 S.R., Shahpur, 1926, op.cit., p. 7.

72 D.G., Shahpur, 1917, op.cit., p. 204.

73 S.R., Lahore, 1935-39, op.cit., p. 5.

noted that other factors apart, "tradition is an important factor in the fixing of kind rents: there is a fixed custom in each village which is not lightly changed".[74] In Chunian Colony rents varied considerably but were "rising rapidly". The batai rates were 1/2 and 1/3 of the produce, though on some well-irrigated land 1/4 was taken.[75]

A much greater variation and fluctuation was seen in rents in the Lower Chenab Colony areas. On Jhang Branch III, cash rents for class I land were in the vicinity of Rs. 9-6-0 per acre while for class VIII land it was Rs. 3-4-0 per acre.[76] On Gugera Branch I, Rs. 11-11-0 per acre for class I land and Rs. 2-3-0 for class V.[77] In these lands rents were influenced by various factors. Thus on Gugera Branch I, cash rents were 'very low' in tracts, such as in Jaranwala sub-tahsil, where there were blocks of nazrānā mauzās, while in those pockets where a nazrānā-paying village was surrounded by peasant villages and squares were let one by one, "a different state of affairs exists."[78] Again, where the tenants available were Janglis, rents were lower, while the presence of Arains and Sikhs pushed rents up for there was always "a superfluous element in their midst, anxious to obtain land and willing to

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74 Ibid., p. 16.

75 A.R., Chunian, 1915, op.cit., para 97.

76 A.R., Jhang Branch III, 1911, op.cit.

77 A.R., Gugera Branch I, 1911, op.cit.

78 Ibid.

pay liberally for it".[79] On this branch the settlement officer found a steady rise in rent rates, which surpassed even the increase in area under cash rents. On Jhang Branch II, cash rents had gone up from Rs. 5-8-0 per acre in 1902 to Rs. 8-3-0 in 1909-10, while on the Upper Jhang Branch, increase in prices inevitably effected rent enhancement. It was observed that "no tract in India perhaps is more responsive to the world wide fluctuations of the grain-market than this .. ...".[80] In the first decade, the increase was from Rs. 200 per acre to Rs. 300 and, at times, even Rs. 400 per acre. Also here rents were paid "over and above the Government land revenue and water-rate charges, which are defrayed entirely by the tenant".[81] On the Rakh Branch by about 1911-12, rents had reached Rs. 400 per square. This was "much lower than they should be" and was attributed to the fact that the Colonisation of the tail of the Gugera Branch led to a movement of cultivators. On this branch, perhaps the most prosperous land in the Lower Chenab Colony, "custom exercises a larger influence than one would expect";[82] thus cash rents which were considered to be a modern innovation did not find favour with the Gujranwala Jats, who "maintained traditional relations

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79 A.R., Gugera Branch II, 1912, op.cit., para 19.

80 Rev. Agri. Rev., July 1909, A, Pro. 44.

81 Ibid.

82 A.R., Rakh Branch, 1913, op.cit.

with their tenants..."[83]

Cash rent consequently rules below average. On the Dijkot distributary, on the other hand, colonists were "injected with the new spirit from their neighbours in the Gugera circles and competition was brisk even in the tail villages".[84]

By the 1920s in these tracts, which now formed a part of Lyallpur district, it was clear that "cash rents respond with comparative promptitude to variation in the market prices of produce".[85] In a short span of time during World War I, rents rose rapidly. While the increase was not so visible in the case of batai rents, in the case of cash rents the tenant came to pay the whole of the demand for land revenue, occupiers' rate and cesses in addition to the cash rate, which too was higher than what it was in 1911. It was clear that the landlord had "managed to shift onto the tenant a considerable share of the enhanced state demand."[86] This struggle became even more acute in the late 'twenties. In Toba Tek Singh, Lyallpur, on nahri area the batai rate without exception was half-half, kachhipakki with equal sharing of the consolidated demand on account of land revenue, water-rates, mālikānā and cesses. Whereas at the time of the 1921

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83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Rev. Agri. Rev., July 1920, A, Pro. 122, F-157.

86 Ibid.

settlement, the landlord's 'liberality' on fodder account had been made a note of, over the years, "whatever laxity may have existed in the past, has disappeared...."[87] Where the landlord resided in the chak, he took his full share of fodder for his own cattle, where he did not require fodder, he "rigidly exacted the money equivalent of his share."[88] All the other incidental expenses of cultivation too were borne by the tenant who was also responsible for labour required for cutting and harvesting of crops the landlord coming in only when the produce heap was ready for division. In Lyallpur villages too a surcharge the 'kharach' was levied, amounting from a seer or two per maund to the produce of a whole killā on one square. The 'kharach', suspended during the worst days of the depression was being revived in sufedposh chaks where it more than compensated for the expense of management. In Lyallpur tahsil itself this struggle for better terms on the part of tenants led to a situation where landlords, who had been used to high cash rents in the past and who could make other arrangements, refused to "transact business", at what then appeared "impossibly low rates."[89] As noted earlier, in large parts of Lyallpur district, the constrains of the depression, and the difficulty in recovering rents resulted in a swing in favour of khudkāsht.[90] Where tenants continued to

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87 A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1937, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

88 Ibid.

89 A.R., Lyallpur, 1936, op.cit., p. 12.

90 Ibid.

work on the same holding for a long time, in some cases as many as fifteen or twenty years, even there batai rents had not remained stationary. While even as late as 1916, batai tenants had paid only government dues, in the post-1916 period there was a "growing tendency for owners to take some share varying in individual cases from 25 per cent to 33 per cent in the earlier years, and from 33 per cent to 50 per cent in later years."[91]

III Landlords Versus Tenants:

Raising of the rent rate formally was, however, only one method by which landlords tried to use their monopoly of land to their advantage. In the event of a struggle being fought out on almost every field to control and retain a greater part of the produce various other methods were also resorted to.

Crop division, for instance, remained a bone of contention throughout as far as produce rents were concerned. Rather, it was this which determined the actual quantum of rent, while at the same time indicating the relative strength of the landlord and tenant. In Durrana Langana, the crop was invariably divided on the harvest floor on the tenant's land, but he was not bound to carry the owner's share to his granary. Resident owners' though, took kirāya, generally half a seer per maund which was paid over to camelmen for transporting the

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91 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 107.

produce. The village survey emphasised that division of produce was a "complicated business", a sentiment expressed in proverb form by the peasants - Dhār chawān to qiāmat āwān - to divide a heap of grain takes until the judgement day. Neither party trusted the other and usually the dumbir - a-hindu - was entrusted the job. For his services he was paid out of the common heap.[92] It was also pointed out that in addition to his share the landlord made deductions for various servicemen appointed by him and who were actually paid by him. It was alleged that the landlord claimed a deduction that was higher than what he actually paid for the services, thereby taking from the tenants a rent "higher than that fixed by agreement".[93] Thus the othwāl, camelman, was paid 5 seers while the deduction was 10 seers. Similarly, for khoj, tracker, the division was 15 seers but he was paid 8 maunds. Similarly, chaukidāra was deducted, while it was fairly common for the big landlords to have the names of two of their own servants' entered as chaukidārs.[94] The report reiterated what has been stated for other regions, that the landowners were making the additional deduction of kharach, taking advantage of the increasing demand for land by levying additional imports - for non-agricultural claimants, such as the Qazi, Qureshi, Mirasi, Bithhara (baker) and others were originally paid from the landlord's share. The kharach zemindāra,

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92 BEIP, PVS, II, op.cit., p. 198.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

then, was one example of how landlords modified batai rents in their own interest by intervening in the process of crop division. It was pointed out that on the Sidhnai too a similar process was on, where before 1924-25 the landlord's share came to 5 out of 9 parts and since then it had been changed to 3 out of 5.[95]

Here, as elsewhere, fodder allowances remained another sphere where "the tenants have lost ground seriously" "In this respect, it was pointed out, landlords were far more liberal earlier."[96]

In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, the produce was always divided on the threshing floor, which was usually on the tenants' land, and never at the owner's house, measuring being done by a common friend, free of charge. Influential owners sometimes had the produce measured by their own shopkeeper, with the tenant having to pay 4 seers of grain for every 8 maunds measured to the shopkeeper. Usually, the landlord managed to take back half of what the tenant paid to the shopkeeper as well.[97] Sometimes when landlord-tenant relations were amicable, the tenant carried the owner's share to his granary free of charge, but if a third person carried it, a deduction was made from the common heap. In this village, much depended on relations between the two, with the owner helping

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95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., p. 217.

97 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 166.

in winnowing, free of charge at times, or the tenant doing it himself, without claiming anything either. It was of course admitted, by the investigators that "when the owner takes a part in reaping or winnowing his object is not so much to obtain the dues he might justly claim as to keep an eye on the tenant." For the mere presence of the owner acted as a "deterrent against the tenant finding ways of appropriating more than his lawful share."[98] If the owner made no charge for his contribution in the operations the tenant too did not object, but in case these charges were claimed, the tenant suffered doubly, by way of payment and in being deprived of the opportunity of misappropriation.[99]

Where a tenant cultivated land belonging to several owners, he deducted from the various common heaps allowances paid or to be paid to the different menials for work on the respective fields.

Crop division remained crucial even in Lyallpur villages. While the division for most crops took place on the tenant's land, with the tenant carrying the owner's share to his granary, cotton was carried by the pickers to the landlord's house and the crop was divided there.[100]

Given the landlords' desire and move toward more direct and close supervision of the process of crop division, tenants

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98 Ibid., pp. 170-174.

99 Ibid.

100 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 113.

resorted to other forms of resistance. In this silent resistance the tenant offered, pilferage was an important play for him to increase his share. Thus in Gujranwala, tenants preferred produce rents on good lands which were so situated as to make lax supervision by the owner.[101] The Gajju Chak report also clarified that where landowners did not personally supervise the reaping and winnowing operations, tenants made no claims for their labour service, the understanding being that tenants had already compensated themselves by keeping a portion of the produce for themselves before division.[102] In Jhang villages, the tenant "often refused to cultivate if a muhassil (chaukidār) was appointed. The landlord had to give way and so indirectly recognises the right of the tenant to pilfer..."[103] The tenant's position was more commanding, if one can use the team, where the well was not too good. He could refuse to pay some of the dues, and the landlord had to accept if he did not want his lands deserted. The settlement officer observed that the position of such landlords was "not to be envied."[104]

Another important feature of landlord-tenant relations was in the sphere of personal obligations. Landlordism as is well known, went hand in hand with ill-defined but extensive extra-legal authority, which included power of coercion

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101 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 162.

102 Ibid., p. 172.

103 S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p. 100.

104 Ibid., p. 106.

also. In our study we find that in the 3 villages surveyed in Colony districts, the situation differed in all three, depending on actual circumstances. Thus in the Lyallpur village, where, as earlier noted, ties of blood relationships and other such customary norms were weakening, landlords wielded far less personal influence. The report went so far as to assert that in the village, tenants had "no obligation to render personal service of any kind," but at the same time conceded on the very next page that tenants threshed owners' share for no payment and though he assisted in harvesting, he received no reapers' dues.[105] Similarly there was no exchange of gifts between the two, and neither arranged for a feast at harvest time for the labourers. The Gajju Chak survey reiterated the same point about tenants being under no obligation to render personal service to the landlord nor to make gifts of any kind including animal produce.[106] Gajju Chak, we may note, was not like the Lyallpur village in an advanced area. However, its lack of prosperity and relative less land hunger, placed its tenants in an advantageous position. Durrana Langana, in Multan was however completely different for here the dominance of the Dehar landlords influenced landlord-tenant relationships in a very specific manner, along with the fact that "the tenants in this part of the country can scarcely be said to have any very definite rights

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105 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 112.

106 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 167.

as against their landlords. They are almost at their mercy and are thankful to take what they get."[107] Although, here too the tenant did not generally make gifts to the landowner, yet, on some occasions when the landlord goes on a round the tenant may offer him some milk or lassi, and food to a non-resident owner.[108] The landlord made no such gifts at all and the practice of feasting labourers at harvest time was dying out. While the landlords were discarding customs and practices which required certain responsibilities on their part the tenant was being pushed into a position of helpless subordination. He was usually "at the disposal of the landlord and dare hardly refuse any call made upon him as this may mean ejection from the holding....."[109] The tenant's services and plough cattle were employed "atleast twice or thrice a year for ploughing the khudkāsht lands of the owners. He also supplies personal labour for clearing out the silt in the canal water courses and helps at the time of digging new wells..."[110] The Dehar landlords even obliged friends by lending them the services of the tenants. The tenants were called in for reclamation work. In 1924 the big Dehar landlords took them to clear their newly-acquired lands in the Lower Bari Doāb. It was noted that with regard to such ser-

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107 BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p. 191.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid., p. 194.

vices, a tenant was "better off with a small landlord who did not require any services beyond those of an ordinary tenant."[111] Despite all these services rendered the Dohar landlords controlled and influenced to a 'considerable extent' the cropping, rotations etc., while resorting to eviction at the slightest provocation.

In Kabirwala tahsil, also in Multan, the comparative insecurity of the region weakened the position of landlords. However, while they were driven to a seemingly liberal stance in their dealings they gained through increase in rent, in both cash and kind rent contracts, as well as by an "appreciable addition to the extra dues taken."[112]

In the Lower Jhelum Colony, the actual proportion of the gross produce realised from the tenant had risen by about 5 per cent in 5 years at the turn of the century; 'kharchā'was a handy weapon.[113]

The depression meanwhile, had its own impact on landlord-tenant relations and on tenancy patterns. Thus in Lyallpur villages, perhaps the most directly hit by the slump, the following trends were visible. Firstly, leases to relations etc. on revenue terms fell drastically. Secondly khudkāsht area went up considerably; area under cash rents contracted, while that on batai registered an increase. In many cases

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111 Ibid., p. 195.

112 A.R., Kabirwala, Multan, 1920, op.cit.

113 Rev. Agri. Rev., May 1902, A, Pro. 32.

where cash rent transactions continued, the tenants were janglis and such tenancies were closer to debt liquidating arrangements;[114] otherwise, cash rent contracts broke down, resulting either in a shift to khudkāsht, or to rents being temporarily scaled down to ensure some recovery.[115] The compromise was at times effected by the landlord foregoing kharch which of late had evoked adverse reactions from tenants.

The practice either fell in disuse or the charge was reduced; in certain areas, there was a "definite move amongst the tenants for revision of the rate of batai contract." While this seemed unlikely, it was admitted that "some sort of liberalisation of kind rents will undoubtedly take place...".[116] It was however clear that whatever laxity existed in the past completely disappeared during the depression.

This was also directly related to the fact that the depression further pushed the tendency for a landlord-tenant relationship to coincide with a creditor-debtor relationship. This was not a new development; not even on the relatively prosperous Lower Chanab Canal irrigated lands. Earlier reports had highlighted that in Baloch and Jangli villages the tenancy transaction was often, in effect, a quasi-mortgage and the rent was written off against the balance due.

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114 A.R., Samundri, 1936, op.cit., pp. 15-16.

115 A.R., Toba Tek Singh, 1937, op.cit., p. 11.

116 A.R., Lyallpur, 1936, op.cit., p. 20.

Later assessment reports confirmed that this was continuing. Needless to say that in such a situation, the bargaining power of the tenant was negligible. While this was definitely true of a large portion of Jangli villages/holdings on the Lower Chenab Canal, Muslim Jats in Multan, Gujranwala and other parts fared no better. Bargaining power vis-a-vis the landlord was, after all, not an isolated phenomenon. In view of loss of previous cultivated or grazing lands, allotments of small holdings on usually very poor lands, an increased land and water charges, added to a low level of or disadvantageous, integration with the market these were in no vantage position. Government policy was in so small way directly responsible for this. As we shall see later in this chapter, these facts were to be of great political significance in the years to come.

For the moment we turn our attention to eviction and ejectment, both legal and non-legal, which landlords resorted to as yet another means of raising rent.

In Gujranwala till the end of the nineteenth century, there was "not the same land hunger as in more congested districts" and in fact, it was noted that over most of the district, the competition was among landlords for tenants.[117] Consequently, a good tenant was "rarely disturbed", except with the view of preventing a possible claim to occupancy rights. Given this situation, the Settlement Officer claimed,

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117 S.R., Gujranwala, 1889-94, op.cit., p. 46.

the "margin of profit left to occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will is considerable", and if rents were unduly forced up by the landlord, tenants always had the option to throw up their holdings and migrate to the newly irrigated Chenab Colony where in the early years there was still a scarcity of tenants and easy terms could be secured.[118]

While this was the case in many districts till the 1890s the situation changed with the advance of Colonisation.

In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala itself, by the 1930s, "short tenures, without any agreements, are the general rule."[119] The landlord frequently removed a tenant, if only to lease him another plot. At times this was done with the intention of taking advantage of the tenants labour on the land through self-cultivation for a while; though the main reason for change in tenancy was to assert a basic right to evict and also thereby enhance rent. By the 1930s, in Lyallpur villages too, changes among tenants were "very frequent". Except where tenants were relatives of owners and that too not always, the general tendency was for tenants to be changed every year after the lohri festival, i.e., around mid-January, or February. Sometimes, if goodwill prevailed between the owner and the tenant, the lease would be renewed. There were a few cases where tenants had remained on the same holding for as long as four or five years, but, even in these, the lease had

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118 Ibid.

119 BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p. 60.

been renewed each year "in order to protect the landlord against any assumed rights of occupancy."[120]

In Durrana Langana, Multan, tenancy contracts ran for a year, from kharif to rabi, "but changes in tenants after the year is over, were not very common"; This did not mean that changes in tenancy did not occur, but they were generally due to "either the landlord getting angry with the tenant for some reason, or the tenant finding better prospects elsewhere."[121] In this particular village, dominated by big Dohar landlords all segments of one main family, it was not possible for a tenant leaving the Dehar landlord against his will, to stay on in the village under other owners.[122] In any case, the question of tenants acquiring occupancy rights did not arise since in cases where the tenant belonged to some strong tribe the Dehar landlords reshuffled the tenants after five or six years.

The impact of frequent changes in tenancy on productivity of land was an issue that several official reports and village surveys drew attention to. While we shall not go into these question here, we look at the legal aspect of the problem here, for it reflected on social development in its own way. Government drew satisfaction from the fact that legislation in Punjab as embodied in the Tenancy Law and the

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120 BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p. 108.

121 BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p. 188.

122 Ibid.

Land Alienation Bill, as well as several amendments to the Tenancy Act gave adequate protection to the tenant and to his right to improvement on land, while at the same time safeguarding the landlord's right to enhancement of rent due to improvements.[123] The reality however was not as bright. For one thing, much of this legislation was pertaining to occupancy tenants, while our evidence shows that the vast majority of tenants in the Colony tracts were tenants-at-will, many of whom were, further tied to landlords in a relationship of debt-mortgage. It was almost impossible for tenants in such circumstances to have benefitted much from these laws. In such a situation, while the layer of tenants as well as owner-tenants would definitely have drawn strength from these laws and found themselves in a position to ward off threats of domination by landlords, the lower rung of tenants, who were having to struggle to maintain their status as tenants, as well as menial-tenants, who combined their agricultural labourer status with that of tenants are likely to have drawn little strength from this legislation.

The years 1890 to 1930s saw a remarkable increase in suits for enhancement, the number of actual executions and ejectments in Punjab Province.[124] In 1907 when the number of decided suits for enhancement of rent doubled, government was anxious to point out that their number was "still very small

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123 Cf. Rev. Agri. Rev., January, 1908, A, Pros. 18-19.

124 Cf. LRARP, annual, for respective years.

in proportion to the number of occupancy-tenants".[125] Further, while conceding that proceedings against tenants-at-will had "increased considerably owing no doubt mainly to a general rise of rents following on the rise in prices;" officials argued that since there were only 6,187 cases of ejectment out of 4 million tenants-at-will, "it is clear that landlords and tenants generally manage to adjust their differences without the aid of the Courts."[126] Subsequently, pointing again to the 'insignificant' litigation between landlords and tenants, it was even claimed that, "seeing that the applications for enhancement were almost invariably successful it can hardly be urged that the landlords are unnecessarily harassing their tenants."[127]

It was an interesting and logically argued position. Government accepted that rents were rising - it could not do otherwise since assessment calculations were based on net assets which in turn had cash rent as the basis of calculation. Productivity of land and returns etc. figured in so far as they could help arrive at a high net assets estimate. If higher assessment was justified in view of "general agricultural prosperity", then it followed that landlords' suits for enhancement of rent were also justified. It is not surprising that ejectments were numerous in districts when settle-

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125 LRARP, 1907, p. 9.

126 Ibid.

127 LRARP, 1909, p. 2.

ment operations were in progress or were likely to begin shortly.[128] Government's interpretation of statistics on this count became more revealing over the years. Thus when in 1911 it was observed that ejectment proceedings against tenants-at-will were 'below normal', attention was drawn to the fact that there was a "marked decrease during the last ten years in the use of all the sections of the Punjab Tenancy Act by which a landlord can proceed towards the ejectment of a tenant-at-will, while the suits by tenants to contest liability to ejectment show an increase."[129] In 1913 it was admitted that more tenants-at-will had been ejected during the year by legal process than in any of the three preceeding years, yet two years later it was being reiterated that "relations between landlords and tenants are cordial;"[130] in 1922, when a record 87 per cent of the suits brought forth for enhancement were successful it was emphasised that this:

> "reflects partly the general rise in prices of produce, and consequently in cash rents and partly, the changing economic conditions. As pressure on the soil increases and communications are opened up, village communities are brought into closer relations with town life and those friendly and family leases on nominal rents and for generous terms which characterised the country-side in the last generation are fast becoming replaced by business-like contracts based on a shrewd

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128 Ibid.

129 LRARP, 1911, p. 8.

130 LRARP, 1913, p. 10; LRARP, 1915, p. 7.

evaluation of present profits and future markets."[131]

This tied up well with the general official position. Meanwhile, as early as 1905, the extension of canal irrigation caused an increase in the number of ejectments - a direct result of landlords' demanding enhanced rents which old tenants were reluctant to pay while new tenants, willing to pay higher rents were easy to get.[132] While in Montgomery the tenant was still the "master of the situation", in Lyallpur the Deputy Commissioner apprehended that "cases of proceedings for ejectment by grantees of tenants who are relatives are likely to become numerous."[133] There was a temporary reprieve for tenants in Lyallpur with the Colonisation of the Ganji Bar which led to a scarcity of tenants for a short while. In Multan and Rawalpindi divisions proceedings were still rare, but Shahpur continued to register a high number of ejectment decrees against occupancy tenants, being next only to Hoshiarpur. In 1917-18 ejectment proceedings were fewer, with Jhang recording not a single instance in 1917 - the Deputy Commissioner attributing this to the recruiting efforts, which placed tenants in a "stronger position and rendered landlords less willing to proceed to extreme measures", which is why perhaps there was talk of return to 'normal conditions' in 1920.[134]

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131 LRARP, 1922, p. 17.

132 LRARP, 1905, p. 8.

133 LRARP, 1906, p. 9.

134 LRARP, 1917, p. 9; LRARP, 1920, p. 11.

Conclusion:

✓ As the social movement in India gathered momentum and attention came to be drawn to the problems facing the vast mass of peasants in India in their capacity as tenants, the bureaucratic stereotype of Punjab being a land of peasant proprietors was propagated. We have shown that this did not infact apply to the Canal Colonies where, right through this period, area cultivated by tenants was, by and large, on the increase. As far as the rent form was concerned, the numerous forms prevailing in the nineteenth century, soon gave way for two basic forms, kind rent and cash rent. The extension of canal irrigation generally led to a shift to produce rents. Cash rents which had been common in some districts prior to Colonisation, also gave way to kind rents. It was only around 1910 that area under cash rents again registered a gradual increase in some districts. This trend was however firmly reversed by the Depression. Apart from the change in form, there was, over time, increase in the rate of rent. On batai lands this was reflected in greater prevalence of half-batai as compared to other, lower rates - prevalent earlier. Apart from an increase in the formal 'rent' rate, landlords tried, often successfully so, to increase their share, by pushing on to tenants expenses which were earlier either shared or strictly the responsibility of landlords. In this tussle between landlords and tenants, the affluent tenants, who were often also owners, taking on additional

land on lease, fared better, while the lower strata of tenant-cultivators found themselves being pushed further down.

Chapter VI

LENDERS AND DEBTORS

In this last chapter we examine the extent of indebtedness in the Canal Colonies, the nature of debt transactions and finally the role and status of different lending agencies or classes. The discussion is directed not so much as to establish the quantum of debt, etc., but to examine the status of the peasant in the Colonies in the context of the oppressive triumvirate of landlord, merchant and moneylender in the Indian countryside. We also examine the various avenues open to the peasant in the Colonies to transact debts, the terms of these transactions and lastly the result of these transactions as seen in alienation and land transfer. The Punjab Government's much publicised anti-moneylender stance is also touched upon in this context.

The debt question was closely linked to the tenancy problem. Throughout British India, in fact, next to land revenue, the tenancy-landlord and debtor-creditor relationships formed part of the history of the struggles that rural classes fought on class issues on a concrete day-to-day basis. We have seen that area under tenant-cultivation in Punjab was a fairly high proportion of total cultivated area; and that throughout this period

the proportion was rising. It was a similar situation in the sphere of indebtedness.

In 1929-30 Punjab ranked third amongst all states in British India in terms of total rural debt, and recorded one of the highest figures for proportion of population involved in debt - with only 17 per cent free of debt.[1] While the situation called for serious thought and, consequent upon that, action, what we find emerging in the 1930s, is a curious logistical exercise which instead of pushing for measures to check the problem, only indirectly justified its existence while doing little to remove it. At government level three clear premises on which official thinking was based emerged, by the early 1900s itself. These were as follows: (1) Unable to hide the scale of indebtedness, and to explain it, a curious hypothesis was worked out - that in Punjab debt was due more to prosperity than to poverty, (2) that government had done the utmost by enacting the Punjab Land Alienation Bill, which put a brake on large-scale transfer of land from the agricultural to non-agricultural classes through a process of debt,- mortgage, alienation. For this purpose a schedule of agricultural and non-agricultural tribes was drawn up for each district and land transfers

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1. BECR, 1931, Minority Report, p.31.

were held valid strictly in accordance with this schedule, (3) debt and distress amongst the peasantry was a result not of economic processes started and forces let loose by post-annexation developments, but, rather, a result of the indolence, thriflessness and ignorance of certain agricultural communities and tribes.[2]

Not surprisingly, much evidence could also be mustered up to give credibility to all three premises and for the next forty years or so this stream of thought penetrated all branches of administration in any way connected with agriculture and the rural classes.

What then was the reality?

Section I - Debt Burden and Pattern of Loan Transactions

Indebtedness, clearly, was not a result of Colonisation although no doubt, a remarkable increase in the volume of debt took place as Colonisation proceeded. In Jhang, for instance, as early as the 1880s, the Settlement Officer commented that "the wretched, foolish Jat never manages to extricate himself. He is sucked dry and then allowed to drop out of the meshes".[3] In Montgomery, in a large part of the valley lands, "villages are as a rule in a depressed state", cultivation was declining and proprietors were

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2. For a lucid expose of this cf., Darling, 1925, op.cit.
3. S.R. Jhang, 1980, op.cit., p.132.

"sunk in indolence and apathy".[4] In Multan, where inundation canals did not run all the time and there was frequent failures of crops, "cultivators were thrown out of their calculations and got into the clutches of the sahukar from whom they had borrowed".[5]

While Gujranwala seemed temporarily better off, with an average debt burden of only six times the land revenue, Darling elaborated that this was due to the new found prosperity of the district after the opening of the Upper Chenab Canal. For, "the immediate effect of the opening of a canal is naturally to reduce debt. People who were poor find themselves rich, mortgages are redeemed, and baniās' accounts settled, all of which has happened here..."[6] But, Darling, went on to argue, sooner or later the blessings of a Canal are neutralised," the reason being the population of the country.[7] To illustrate his point he cited the case of Lyallpur where, in the six years ending 1930, mortgage debt had increased by 141 lakhs, and again by 88 lakhs by 1940. He concluded from this that, "if present conditions persist, the Canal Colony districts will eventually become as indebted as

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4. A.R. Gugera, Montgomery, 1894, op.cit., para 96.
5. PPBECR, p.952, Oral evidence of the zamindars of Multan.
6. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.73
7. Ibid.

any other part of the province."[8]

The depression hit the peasantry in the Canal Colonies particularly hard for, it upset all calculations regarding profit, savings, debt, etcetera in one go. It was admitted that the cultivators' load of debt had increased and his credit gone.[9] The Settlement Report for Lyallpur admitted that even Lyallpur was "no longer the land of glamour and gold that it was".[10] The worst part of the slump was that it, "caught the peasant unawares," and "what dragged the peasant down like a millstone in the neck, was the heavy debt burden he had thoughtlessly piled up."[11] The years saw an unprecedently sharp increase in mortgage debt as well as mortgaged area, and a shift in favour of usufructuary mortgage transactions by sāhukārs. In Shahpur district, moneylenders resorted to "taking leases of lands held by horse-breeders in order to obtain payments of their debt".[12] In Lyallpur, all tahsils saw a manifold increase in mortgaged area along with a corresponding fall in mortgage money per acre. It was a similar story on the Rakh Branch Circle, Sheikhupura.

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8. Ibid., p.224.
9. LRARP, 1932-33
10. S.R.,Lyallpur, 1940, op.cit., p.13.
11. cf. At Ullah, op.cit., p.191.
12. P.C.R., Shahpur, 1926-27, p.34.

While these developments affected the general mass of rural population, they particularly hit the weaker sections; In Samundri tahsil, for instance, of the 4.9 per cent land that had been allotted to Janglis, 3.1 per cent was mortgaged to sāhukārs.[13] In Toba Tek Singh it was the Muslim Jats who were not likely to "forget the lesson that adversity had taught them;" although they were making determined efforts to wipe out their debts by giving portions of their land to sāhukārs for a few years and avoiding to borrow anymore.[14] All told, there was little possibility of mortgages transacted at very high prices in the early years being redeemed in view of the fact that the size of holdings was also being reduced. In many regions indebtedness reduced owners to the status of tenants.[15]

However, to put the record straight, it may be noted that till about 1919, the Colony districts did not figure amongst the most heavily indebted. It was the sub-montane and East Punjab districts which inevitably featured in this list. At the same time, only a very small percentage of the rural population in the Colonies was entirely free of debt.[16]

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13. A.R., Samundri, op.cit., p.13.
14. A.R., Toba Tek Singh, op.cit., p.9.
15. BEIP., P.V.S., 4, op.cit., p.78.
16. PCSR, 1919, p.20.

Pattern of Loan Transaction

The nature of these debt transactions varied considerably, both over time, and from district to district. Yet, even while no uniform pattern existed to begin with, over the years loans against security of mortgage became common and within this, debts based on usufructuary mortgage were preferred. This was a situation vastly different from that described in the settlement reports till the 1890s which generally resembled Montgomery - a district heavily plagued by indebtedness - but where debts were not secured by mortgage because moneylenders found that "it pays better to have a running account rather than the responsibilities and losses incindental to land tenure."[17]

The change that came about in the 1900s was partly at least, prompted by the restraint on alienation due to the Land Alienation Bill, by which professional moneylending castes could not acquire agriculturists' property. It was also, no doubt a trend that gathered momentum as agriculture in the region became a commercial venture which rich agriculturists sought to turn to their advantage by bringing under their control a greater area for cultivation, acquired through usufructuary mortgage. Consequently with the rising importance of agriculturist moneylenders in the post-1900 period, usufructuary mortgage became a more common feature,

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17. A.R. Gugera, Montgomery, 1894, op.cit., para 96.

especially in the 'prosperous' Canal Colonies, even so, in the Colonies mortgage and alienation assumed significance only after 1912 when guarantees acquired proprietory rights.

There were other dimensions to this preference for usufructuary transactions also. In Gajju Chak, Gujranwala, Muslim agriculturists advanced money against mortgages. While acquiring land for cultivation on a cheaper basis than rent and managing to safeguard their loans they also technically got out of the religious prohibition on usury. Meanwhile the borrowers preferred loans on mortgage, especially when large sums were taken for a long period as that way they could avoid piling up of the principal through addition of interest.[18]

As stated earlier, in the Colony districts, the extent of mortgage debt began to rise rapidly only after 1912, when proprietory rights were officially bestowed on the vast mass of Colonists. In Lyallpur district, for instance, the amount of mortgage debt went up from Rs. 47,190 to Rs. 7,35,016.[19] In the years that followed, a marked increase in mortgage debt and area under mortgage was accompanied by a progressive rise in the value of land.

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18. BEIP, PVS., 6, op.cit., p.14

19. LRARP, 1913, p.15.

Table 6.1

Mortgages in Lyallpur District

A. Transfers to Agriculturists

Year	SAMUNDRI			LYALLPUR			TOBA TEK SINGH			CHUNIAN		
	Cultivated	Mortgage Money	Av.per Acre	Cultivated	Mortgage Money	Av.per Acre	Cultivated	Mortgage Money	Av.per Acre	Cultivated	Mortgage Money	Av.per Acre
Total up to the beginning of 1923-24	5213	1165086	212	9696	2451237	245	8623	2321225	261	2340	466904	188
1923-24	1251	330005	254	2502	720756	268	2155	681556	306	564	173037	304
1924-25	1437	410679	175	2719	904607	354	2038	582359	279	520	121380	232
1925-26	2353	656153	277	2536	673945	334	1959	651242	324	919	207241	222
1926-27	1584	473493	296	2944	953556	318	2582	683645	260	1355	405808	269
1927-28	2974	846370	280	3502	1128081	318	2804	692773	241	1764	418032	233
1928-29	2419	612327	244	2968	956503	315	2599	615914	230	1842	406539	210
1929-30	2202	517856	230	2933	876888	305	3307	775035	228	1432	315489	217
1930-31	2161	560119	240	4096	1226311	297	3177	718396	215	1520	340572	219
1931-32	2775	602715	207	4047	1031756	205	3354	602995	173	1937	360371	182
1932-33	3948	593572	150	4636	950709	200	3507	614423	170	1519	244944	159
Total 1923-24 to 1932-33	28322	6760775	231	43350	12169279	274	35105	8939563	240	13380	2093473	219
Deduct area redeemed	12212	1956117	152	13931	2634328	185	12029	2151629	169	5510	924351	162
Total at the end of 1932-33	16029	4801265	290	29402	9534951	317	23732	6787935	277	12210	2536026	242
B. Others:												
Total up to the beginning of 1923-24	2599	161433	49	1358	150656	107	1913	356069	170	449	100224	215
1923-24	721	73992	92	234	29247	120	394	35656	87	11	3300	275
1924-25	829	148456	161	449	111755	241	801	84153	102	76	10477	134
1925-26	1270	159287	115	171	29225	168	1470	217795	140	111	13677	112
1926-27	550	101442	180	763	191983	240	1247	176816	134	307	39454	126
1927-28	828	86272	99	1253	182780	142	1468	175926	116	374	81682	208
1928-29	1957	271164	130	698	99186	139	2267	309858	129	581	109358	181
1929-30	1524	230653	148	1044	170d12	156	2318	326801	134	799	98567	119
1930-31	1929	265447	134	1422	432533	299	3592	473290	125	790	114067	140
1931-32	2621	292551	110	2747	406473	145	4944	587007	113	562	49294	83
1932-33	3681	362666	93	2445	286450	115	4246	416988	93	896	62738	66
Total 1923-24 to 1932-33	16889	2153363	108	12604	2091100	162	24660	3160367	121	4507	582614	124
Deduct area redeemed	4935	850028	86	3758	782687	203	8340	969740	111	1612	233096	139
Total at the end of 1932-33	13654	1703335	115	8763	1308433	144	18380	2190627	127	3344	449742	129

Source: A.R.Samundri, op.cit.; A.R.Toba Tek Singh, op.cit.
A.R. Lyallpur, op.cit.; A.R.Chuniān Colony, op.cit.

This in fact, in many instances, led to many mortgages being redeemed, with the object of remortgaging a smaller area for the same amount of debt. The war years, meanwhile, saw a temporary decline in redemptions which was to be explained not by "want of funds resulting from economic depression but to a certain degree of distrust in the future political stability of the country.[20] It seems that in this period funds otherwise available for redemption, were probably put into hoard, pending the clearing up of the 'political horizon.' By 1920, while the total area under usufructuary mortgage in the province was diminishing, the total debt secured showed a progressive increase.

Official explanation for mortgage and delay in redemption tended to take cognizance of this phenomenon only vis-a-vis the more stable and affluent strata of the peasantry. Thus increase in mortgage in Central Punjab districts was attributed to the "proneness of the Central Punjabi to migrate;"[21] officials, however, saw migration as a step forward, towards greater wealth, while observing the pressure of population in the home districts - thereby completely ignoring the migration prompted by pauperization and dispossession of the lower ranks of the peasantry. Kessinger's evidence shows that a sizeable portion of the

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20. LRARP, 1919, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

21. LRARP, 1921, p.17

migration from Vilyatpur was from amongst the poor peasants, who went out to other regions - within Punjab or perhaps even outside the country, in search of other options.[22] The extent of labour migration into the Canal Colonies proves that the official explanation tending to equate migration with a search for greener pastures applied only to a very small section.

A similar attempt to highlight only the brighter aspect can be seen in the understanding contained in these reports regarding redemptions. It was for instance clarified that no direct correlation existed between a good harvest and redemption of mortgaged land. Instead, it was a question of the peasant being "faced with alternative investments."[23] It was argued that since "credit is easier and he is not likely to be pressed for his debt," the peasant could exercise a choice as to redeeming mortgaged land, or acquiring new land for cultivation by purchase. While government cited the figures for a few years when a good harvest was not matched by consequent rise in redemptions, it also deduced from this that "on the whole the economic position of the agriculturists was slightly strengthened."[24] This view again reflected only a partial reality, relating to the upper strata of the

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22. Kessinger, 1979, p.165.

23. LRARP, 1923, p.42

24. Ibid.

peasantry, which the government sought to project for the entire province as a whole, totally sidetracking the problems that were being faced by the less prosperous or marginal peasant households.

As far as debt incurred against the security of land mortgage was concerned, a pattern seems to have emerged: In the rich Colony tracts most debts were with mortgage, and all mortgages were with possession. In the Lyallpur village, for example, only in one case the mortgagee retained possession, although in all except two the mortgagee continued to cultivate the land.[25] In Gajju Chak, similarly all mortgages were with possession, subject to redemption on payment of debts, but almost all had a condition attached that the mortgagee would not give up the land within a certain period, from 3 to 20 years, as compared to 2 to 18 years. In Kala Gaddi Thamman again, in 25 out of 42 cases, the mortgagee cultivated the land, while tenants-at-will cultivated in 16. There was a clear tendency, to "use mortgages in order to secure additional land for cultivation.[26] Durrana Langana was slightly different. Here the big Dehar landlords alone could afford to take land on mortgage, but they "preferred

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25. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.79

26. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.123.

taking full proprietory rights of the land to taking it on mortgage....."[27]

The lekhā-mukhi contract, described by Thorburn as the "first step towards ruin," very common in the early period seems to have declined over the years.[28] Under this contract the debtor surrendered his crop to the baniā, who paid all expenses for him, deducted interest due to himself, and finally, was supposed to credit the balance towards the liquidation of debt. This, however, was seldom attained. The contract suited the creditors while lulling the debtor into a false sense of security for a while, since in theory he remained the proprietor though he was already practically reduced to the position of tenant. Thorburn considered the system to be so 'pernicious' that under it the "peasant proprietors of a whole district might be reduced to serfdom without the fact being shown in agricultural statistics...."[29]

The nature of transaction depended on a series of other factors, social and subjective. Thus, in Multan villages, personal security was considered better; in fact if the debtor had the reputation of being punctual

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27. BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.148.
28. Thorburn, 1886, op.cit., p.83.
29. Ibid.

in repayments, money lenders "did not bother much about security."[30] In Durranga Langana, in fact, three brothers who had left the village and taken up cultivation in another, caused no worry to the moneylender since he was confident that they would repay.[31] In Gajju Chak, those with good credit sometimes stood surety for others, while many borrowed on the security of ornaments. Moneylenders sometimes lowered interest on borrowings against ornaments since they themselves could obtain money cheaply against security of ornaments.[32]

Credit worthiness and general status of the borrower affected the terms of the transaction in so far as interest too was, to some extent, dependent on these. At a general level we know that interest rates in Punjab were fairly high atleast from the 1880s onwards - being in the vicinity of 25%. The Settlement Report for Jhang district recorded that interest was charged at the rate of 24% per annum. It added that with this interest a debt doubled in about three years.[33] Approximately thirty years later, village surveys revealed that rates continued to remain high, even when they had not risen.

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30. BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.125
31. Ibid.
32. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.114.
33. S.R., Jhang, 1880, op.cit., p.132.

In the Lyallpur village, accounts were made every half-year, viz., in Asarh (June-July) and in Magh (January-February). At compound interest at the common rate of 2 annas per rupee for any period not exceeding six months - this worked out at 12 ½ per cent for six months or approximately 26 per cent per annum, while in some cases it was as high as 3 annas per rupee for six months of 41 per cent per annum. Only very few people, with more than ordinary credit managed loans at 15 per cent to 18 per cent per mensem.[34] In Gajju Chak as well, "those with poor credit paid high rates of interest."[35]

In Multan, while the general rate of interest in many villages was 12 per cent per annum in 1925, in some cases it rose to over 18 per cent. However, here even transactions against the security of jewellery were at a minimum of 12 per cent interest since such transactions were entered into by those with exceptionally low credit.[36] As elsewhere, the rate of interest varied with the necessity of the borrower, and his standing. Normally, 6 per cent per annum was charged from other shopkeepers, 12 per cent from those known for prompt payment and 12 per cent to 75 per cent from all others", "Paise Rupiyā Māhwār" , or

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34. BETP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.77

35. BETP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.115.

36. BETP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.136.

one pice per rupee per month i.e. 183/4 per cent per annum was also common.[37] It was also a common practice to fix rates after the loan was advanced, leaving the borrower with very little option. In Multan villages, the usual months for settlement of accounts were Sāwan for the Rabi, Poh or Māgh for Kharif and Phāgan, especially for cotton.[38] Apart from the interest, chilkānā or a preliminary discount of 2 pice per rupee was deducted on all cash advances. In addition to this the moneylender expected milk, fuel and fodder. If the moneylender combined the services of a shopkeeper, then he also profited by charging higher prices than those prevailing for credit purchases made by the debtor.[39]

In Lahore, the amount stated in the bond included Khudā kā Khauf, or pre-paid interest.[40] The Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Lahore, was of the opinion that interest fates were usually between 18 per cent and 24 per cent, though in the case of loans advanced by women, even 37 ½ per cent was possible.[41] In Montgomery, prevailing rates of interest were found "exorbitant" by

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37. Ibid.
38. A.R.Mailsi, 1920, op.cit.
39. BETP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.136.
40. PPBECR, op.cit., p.177.
41. Ibid., p.391.

Major Vanrenen, a capitalist landlord. Here too the normal rate was 25 per cent, with considerable variation, though. It was felt that professionals charged high rates as compared to agriculturists who engaged in money-lending. But even the latter charged high rates from improverished janglis, "because their security is bad." In Nili Bar Colony, Montgomery rates were found high because the moneylender did not know at all whether, "the man will not abandon his land and leave the place altogether."[42]

In Lyallpur, the lowest interest rate prevailing was 25 per cent per annum for a six month loan. While this rate was paid even by Jats, tribes known to be less business like paid anything up to 100 per cent on their loans.[43] For loans for purchase of bullocks etc., payment was made in instalments over the following two harvests, with the lightest six-monthly instalment being Rs.60, on a purchase of Rs.100, though two six-monthly instalments of Rs.75 for a Rs.100 purchase were common.[44]

As far as interest rates were concerned, Darling's observation that the system of calculating at compound interest was, "the most vicious feature of the system," remained valid throughout this period and applicable to

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42. Ibid., p.144.

43. PCSR, 1906, p.5.

44. PCCSR, 1908, App., p.111.

the entire region.[45] The axe fell heaviest on the weakest. As stated earlier it was common for those with no security and little creditworthiness to pay the highest rate of interest as well as pander to the insatiable greed of the sāhukār. While the more prosperous peasants commanded better terms, the poor peasant could ill-afford to displease the sahukar.

The following features were common to debt transactions throughout the region:-

a) deduction on all loans advanced - usually 5 per cent - at the time of advance itself.

b) compounding of interest on a half-yearly basis.

c) calculation of interest for 13 months if a loan was taken in January and returned the following January. At times both the months were counted twice over.

d) most moneylenders kept cattle, fodder for which was provided by his clients.

e) often grain was sold to the moneylender who calculated at least one or two seers in the maund less than the market rate.

f) seed loans when given were taken back at 50 per cent interest normally, but the rate could go up to even 400 per cent in bad times.

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45. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.187.

By and large these conditions remained valid for the period. In fact the terms and conditions of transactions deteriorated along with the status of the peasant and general conditions. The Co-operative Societies, specifically credit societies, formed around the 1900s, could pick up only in the pre-first world war period. Stabilising and partial success of these invited hostility from the commercial classes. The moneylenders' reaction to the situation was two-fold. The first was a temporary scaling down of interest rates, which provide some relief and the second was to organise boycotts in combination with the arhtiās. The provincial enquiry noted that after the world war, interest rates were falling, cash deals came to be preferred as compared to the earlier grain deals and there was a gradual discontinuance of semi-feudal charges on credit.[46] This was also stated in their evidence by some who appeared before the Committee, while for Multan rates as low as 7 per cent to 8 per cent were cited, in Montgomery too 9 per cent to 12 per cent interest rate was charged in the twenties as against 2 per cent per mensem earlier.[47] However, as in other spheres of the economy a reversal of this downward trend was noted by the end of the twenties.[48]

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46. PPBECR, op.cit., p.34.

47. Ibid., pp.945 and 1100.

48. Ibid.

Whereas specific data relating to indebtedness amongst various social classes in the Colonies is not available, except for a few facts from village surveys, certain broad trends emerge from a study of the reports of this period. While the volume of total debt was higher amongst the more prosperous, so that a kind of positive correlation emerges between holding size and the volume of debt, there was an inverse correlation between the size of holding and incidence of debt, so that the smaller the owner, the larger the debt per acre. Thus in Gajju Chak it was observed that owners were much more heavily in debt than tenants, with ownership of land proving to be of advantage in raising credit.[49] In Kala Gaddi Thamman, again, 93.4 per cent of the total amount borrowed - Rs.96,509 - was by owners while tenants' borrowing amounted to only 2.8 per cent. 34 out of 58 owner-families in the village were in debt.[50] In Multan as well, indebtedness amongst large owners was high while at the end of the thirties, extension of credit to poor tenants had stopped as, "recovery from them was more difficult."[51]

Although this to a large extent substantiates Darling's point that debt in Punjab was linked to prosperity,

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49. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.85.

50. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.72.

51. BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.121.

we shall here only reiterate that while this was true if the total volume of debt was taken into account, to conclude from this that the incidence of debt was higher amongst the prosperous peasantry would be misleading. Moreover, it would help to only cover up the miserable conditions in which a vast mass of poor peasants were eking out their existence even in the prosperous Colony tracts. These, as stated earlier, had in fact, to borrow on worse terms, and the possibility of their ever throwing off the burden if it existed at all earlier was ruled out once and for all by the depression.

As far as the purpose for which loans were contracted were concerned, despite the fact that the pattern was similar in the entire region, certain distinctions can be made. Loans for personal expenditure, for repayment of old debts, purchase of plough cattle were common causes; in non-Colony tracts loans for expenditure on wells continued to be significant and even increase along with greater uncertainty of sailāo. Expenses on litigation and marriage went up with the status of the peasant. In Colony regions loans for redemption of old mortgages, often in original, home districts, were common.

Section - II- Sources of Rural Credit

The sources from which loans were taken were easily identifiable. The only official source for borrowing was

the 'takavi' scheme, which came under the Land Improvement and Agriculturists Loans Act, 1884. From amongst the traditional sources of borrowing were the professional moneylenders and the agriculturist moneylenders, whose operations were given a tremendous boost by the Land Alienation Act. Relatives, and women, were also a source of borrowing throughout this region though the extent of their lending operations is the most difficult to gauge. From the 1900s, the cooperative societies, specifically the co-operative credit societies emerged as a kind of semi-official source of lending.

Of these, the first could, perhaps, be written off the most easily. As early as 1904, Government of India admitted that loans under the 1884 Act, popularly known as Takavi were hardly given any more, whereas earlier, some money had been advanced for construction of watercourses and such improvements. As a multitude of problems came to the fore in the period immediately after Colonisation, government officials came out strongly in favour of a tough posture ruling out virtually all scope of offering any relief to agriculturists. Interestingly, while a proposal to launch a chanda scheme to advance loans to horse-breeding grantees for replacement of broodmares was ruled out, the loan application of certain individuals/families were entertained in view of their

'political importance'.[52] While the Colonists' general problems were ignored, the request for a Rs.1,00,000 loan to Sadat Ali Khan and Kalab Ali Khan, of Kotkamalia, Montgomery was given a sympathetic treatment, "in view of the service rendered to the British by the family in times when we stood in need of assistance" and it was found to be a case in which "public funds may be justifiably utilised in aid of the family."[53] Similarly, at a later date when the question of advancing loans under the 1884 Act, to carry on industries subsidiary to agriculture came up, the Punjab Government clarified that in the past such loans had neither been asked for, nor made.[54]

Enquiries at the cultivators' end revealed that takāvi was far from popular. While many did not know what the scheme was, those who knew, raised "familiar objections": relating to "difficulty in receiving a loan from government," they added that the "enforced punctuality of repayment acted as a deterrent."[55] As compared to this the Arora's readiness to sell even cattle on instalments was convenient, even though the cultivators ended up paying more to him. In Gajju Chak, while

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52. Rev.Agri.Rev., August 1905, A.Pro.10, F.192.
53. Rev.Agri.Rev., February 1907, A.Pro .8, F.102.
54. Comm.Ind., Comm.Trade, March 1916, B. Pro.61, F.104.
55. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.71.

peasants were familiar with the purposes for which takāvi was to be obtained, after 1892, no one had availed of it. By and large, loans were taken from moneylenders including when the option to borrow from a co-operative society was available. Thus I.D., an owner, and a member of the village co-operative credit society, borrowed from a moneylender of Talwandi Khajurwali to purchase a milch buffalo. In this particular case the reason lay in the borrower's express desire to keep his action secret, for, "publicity brings discredit which may have serious consequences, such as that of discouraging his fellows from giving their daughters to his sons in marriage."[56] This was as common a case for approaching moneylenders as the fact that for all official loans, "the lower official staff of the tahsil have to be gratified or they are likely to cause unnecessary dealys."[57] Another common complaint was the rigid implementation of payment schedules. While for takāvi payments had to be made even when the harvest was bad, the moneylender would postpone the payment in an unfavourable season; no doubt interest would accumulate, "but the zamindar's honour would be saved."[58]

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56. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.110.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

As compared to takāvi, co-operative societies were more successful. While these societies were formed all over Punjab from about 1900 onwards, they registered relatively greater success in the Colonies. By the 1920s the societies had developed upon their credit establishment, while at the same time branching off into a series of diverse operations. These included assistance in production and sale, supply of seed, distribution of agricultural implements, cattle and other insurance schemes. In the 1920s attention was paid to set up Commission shops in the bigger mandis to enable disposal of peasants' produce at reasonable rates. By the 1930s, with the progress of co-operatives, 64 Banking Unions and Central Banks were functioning; there were 12 Land Mortgage Banks which created credit by issue of mortgage bonds bearing interest and being payable to the bearer. These banks advanced loans against mortgages without possession."[59]

Nevertheless, the progress of co-operatives in the province was uneven. While in some districts there was tremendous scope, in others, societies came up against excessive problems. In Montgomery, the major block to development came in the form of resistance by moneylenders, who refused to accept payments due to them which would have led to finishing the debt contract; it soon became clear

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59. At Ullah, op.cit., p.192.

that the law was inadequate when it came to evicting a mortgagee in possession of land.[60] In Multan, of the several societies set up since 1898, only 3 survived in 1906; in Shahpur one lone society, founded by Malik Umar Hayat Khan made any progress at all, although by 1910 things seemed to be improving in both the Colony and the old villages.[61] The need for credit societies was also being strongly felt in districts like Lyallpur, where, despite all official claims of prosperity and security of agriculture, "while after a good harvest all are lenders, after a failure most are borrowers".[62]

One may still ask the question as to how far the co-operatives served the purpose of providing support to the small cultivator? Or, did they serve as instruments in the hands of a few shareholders who were also the dominant landowners in the village, who could use the society to derive high dividends on their investments?

The Lyallpur village survey gives some clue to the real solution. In the course of the survey, it was observed that "tenants do not appear to join the village co-operative Credit Societies as freely as the owners."[63] Of its 53 members, 42 were landowners, 4 tenants and 7 menials or artisans.

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60. PCCSR, 1906, p.6.

61. PCCSR, 1910, p.7.

62. PCCSR, 1906, op.cit., p.5.

63. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.63.

In the Multan village, membership had increased by 1925, but the members were all enlisted by the leading landlord of the village and were all either his tenants or indebted to him. It was even alleged that loans were in reality paid to the landlord and some of the borrowers were ignorant of the fact that they were even members of the society. Many cultivators felt that the society was merely a device whereby the rich could buy off the lands of the poorer and cited the example of two members who had failed to meet their liabilities to the society and were compelled to sell their land to the leading landlord. It was believed that indebtedness to the non-agricultural moneylender was preferable since him "they could evade, or they could postpone his demands by entreaties and presents of fodder, or by handing over some of their cattle in part payment of their dues, this could not be done with a governmental concern."[64]

Government conceded the existence of the problem in 1918 when it was mentioned that steps were being taken to diminish the predominance of a few shareholders, may be by "more restrictions on the distribution of profits".[65] However, there was clearly some divergence of opinion as regards the aim of setting-up of co-operative societies.

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64. BETP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.124.

65. PCSR, 1918.

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As early as 1905-06, the Financial Commissioner, issued instructions and guidelines, with a view to keeping in check the desire of many in government, "to commence the experiment where it was likely to succeed," and to specifically pay attention to districts where the "poverty and backwardness of the people rendered such association especially necessary".[66] In 1916, H.D.Craik, Revenue Secretary, Punjab, drew the attention of Government of India to the need to create conditions which would enable the small agriculturists to obtain capital for his needs on the same terms as the wealthy and powerful, an aspect which was treated as being of "minor importance" even by the Committee on co-operation in India.[67]

The officials drew attention to the success of co-operatives by pointing out that in about 700 societies, spread all over the province, members were entirely free of Sāhukārs' debts, while over, 1,000 societies were independent of any financial agency; in Lyallpur, Hoshiarpur and Jullunder districts, members had more money in their societies than they owed to them.[68] Proceeding along these lines, a specially positive relation was seen between Colonisation and co-operation, more

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66. PCSSR, 1906, op.cit., p.1.

67. Rev.Agri.Rev., Nov.1919, A.Pro.11.

68. PCSR, 1920, p.15.

so on the basis of the fact that in most Colony districts, the majority of societies were in the Colony portions of the districts.[69]

Clearly, official attention was turned towards 'success' in general, with no special attention being paid to ensure support to those who actually needed it. In Lyallpur, seen as ideal ground for progress in this sphere, the effort was to attract the savings of agriculturists, "rather than function merely as a cheap lending society". Keeping this in mind, the setting up of Bank Unions and a Central district Bank in the district, was seen as a good outlet of investment for the rapidly increasing capital of the Colony. What spurred the officials on along these lines was the fact that their hopes seemed to be materialising; by 1910 there were 57 societies in Lyallpur district with a capital of over Rs.3 lakhs; the district banks were "profitable business concerns", lending their surplus funds to other societies, and having neighbourhood banks amongst their clients.[70] There was a demand for more agricultural banks here, and officials directly connected with co-operation believed that "the Chenab Colony in particular offers a very wide field for progress in this direction."[71]

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69. PCSR, 1911, p.12.

70. PCSSR, 1910, p.6.

71. Canal Colonies' Committee Report, 1909, p.760.

That the success of co-operation was not spread evenly across the Colonies, was admitted in Shahpur, where, after the starting of the Central Bank at Sargodha, it was felt that "deposits were not flowing in with the speed one might hope to see in a Colony Centre;" it was conceded that while there is a "large amount of indebtedness" in the Jhelum Colony, "there is not yet much surplus wealth".[72]

Thus Co-operatives, like takāvi, could not come to the rescue of the small agriculturist. While on the one hand it was not part of official policy to specifically aim at giving relief to this section; on the other, the strength and power of the moneylender was such that, "where the sāhukār has his grip on a village, no cooperative bank can hope to start, as none of the sāhukār's debtors, who most need the bank's help, dare join or borrow from it."[73] Moneylenders' reaction to the establishment of co-operatives wastwo-fold, but both stemmed from their basic attitude of seeing them as a "trespass on his special preserve".[74] On the one hand, the moneylender resorted to a temporary lowering of interest rate and on the other, combined with the arhtiās to put obstacles in the way of co-operative societies. Several boycotts were organised in Lyallpur, Sargodha, Sangla, Jalalabad, Gujranwala, Jaranwala and Toba Tek Singh.[75]

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72. PCCSR, 1910, p.2.
73. PPBECR, op.cit., p.139.
74. PCCSR, 1907, p.14.
75. At Ullah, op.cit., p.274.

Thus while governmental sources of borrowing seemed to offer little relief to the agriculturist in need of credit, the hold of moneylenders on Punjab's economy, and specifically in the Canal Colonies, continued to deepen. Further, government's attitude to the problem was even more remarkable in that it actually expressed in a very general sense, satisfaction at the debt situation in the Canal Colonies. Official concern was, at this point, directed at identifying and hence may be siding with the 'lesser evil' amongst the moneylending groups. The question remained - could there by a 'lesser evil'?

Section III - Debt and Land Alienation

It may be recalled that ever since the 1880s onwards, a massive debate had gone on in official circles in Punjab as regards the state of moneylenders in Punjab, their role in society and the policy to be adopted vis-a-vis them.[76] This discussion came to a peak in the years immediately preceding the passage of the Land Alienation Bill. The basic thrust of official policy as it evolved by the end of the 19th century consisted of two related features: The first of these was the need felt to tackle the problem of debt since it was considered necessary to check alienation and transfer of land from the agriculturist to the non-agriculturist classes. This was to be implemented on the

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76. cf. V.D. Dungen, 1972.

basis of agricultural tribes as defined in the official schedule, drawn up on a districtwise basis. However, in drawing up this schedule not much attention was paid to the fact that defined 'agricultural tribes' did not necessarily follow an agriculturist's profession. This understanding was given legislative shape in the form of the Land Alienation Act and government felt the menace of moneylending had been checked. When later reports confirmed that though direct alienation to professional moneylenders had been restricted by this Act, it had in turn given a tremendous boost to agriculturist moneylenders, official response was lukewarm. In fact it was implicitly argued that since a large part of the debt was due to improvidence and thriftlessness of 'bad cultivators' there was no cause for concern if land was passing from their hands into those of industrious cultivators. This, in a sense, was an ideological defence of the rapid differentiation that was taking place in the region.

This, however, was not a uniform process, nor should this be taken to mean that professional moneylenders were a spent force. What does emerge from evidence available is that in the period 1900 to 1930 in many of the regions, especially in districts that were commercially more advanced, the scope of activity widened for agriculturist moneylenders. In Kala Gaddi Thamman, over

20 years, while the number of non-agriculturist moneylenders rose from five to ten, that of agriculturist moneylenders rose from 2 to 36 in the same period. The latter emerged as the principle source of borrowing for owners, tenants and labourers in the village. The village survey recorded that whereas some 19 per cent of debt was owed to professional moneylenders, "cultivators were not now primarily dependent on the non-agriculturist moneylenders".[77] In this village, in fact, even loans taken from the co-operative society were almost double those from professional moneylenders. Of the debt in the village, 60 per cent was owed to agriculturist moneylenders and around 20 per cent to the Co-operative Society.[78] In Gajju Chak, similarly, six Muslim agriculturists advanced money against security of a mortgage with possession but no interest. However, in Gajju Chak the greater portion of the debt due to outsiders was to Hindu moneylenders.[79] In Durrana Langana, on the other hand, a fairly large portion of the debt was owed to non-resident, non-agriculturist moneylenders, including dhanwāis — weighmen — and milk-vendors of Multan City.[80] In Montgomery district too,

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77. BEIP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.72.

78. Ibid.

79. BEIP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.114.

80. BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.125.

only about 5 per cent of the debt was owed to agriculturists.[81]

Table 6.2

Mortgages of Land in Punjab (Percentages)

Year	To Agriculturists	To Non-agriculturists
1875-1879	46.2	53.8
1880-1884	52.4	47.6
1885-1889	63.0	37.0
1890-1894	70.4	29.6
1901-1905	70.2	29.8
1906-1910	75.5	24.4
1911-1915	75.86	24.1
1916-1920	81.16	18.8
1921-1925	77.7	22.2
1926-1930	75.5	24.45

Source: Rev. Agri. Rev., October 1895, A.72-73.
LRARP, Annual, Relevant Years.

As Table 6.2 shows there was a general trend in Punjab for increasingly more land to be mortgaged to agriculturists. This reached its peak around 1920; yet there was at least a partial reversal in the twenties itself so that by 1930 there was a 6 per cent increase in land mortgaged to non-agriculturists and a corresponding decline in area mortgaged to agriculturists in the same period.

81. PPBECR, op.cit., p.130.

Table 6.3

Mortgages to 'Non-Agriculturists'

	As percentage of total mortgages			
	1874-75	1884-85	1920-21	1930-31
Central				
Lahore	60	44	17	10
North-West				
Shahpur	91	69	38	31
Central & South-West				
Montgomery	89	57	51	44
Lyallpur	-	-	24	37
Jhang	75	64	60	64
Multan	30	61	62	74

Source: LRARP, relevant years.

Table 6.3 shows that the trend in the Colony districts was not very different from that for the rest of Punjab, although Lahore, Shahpur and Montgomery did not experience any check, leave alone a reversal in mortgages to agriculturists in the third decade. In Lyallpur, Jhang and Multan the general pattern for Punjab was repeated, with greater sharpness in fact. Lyallpur for instance, witnessed a 13 per cent increase in mortgages to non-agriculturists, and Multan followed close on with a 12 per cent increase.

TABLE 6.4

CULTIVATION OF MORTGAGED LAND
IN THREE VILLAGES

Village/ District	Mortgages registered in the years	Percentages of mortgages cultivated by:			
		Mort-gagees	Mortga-gers	Tenants-at-will	Others
1. Gajju Chak (Gujran-wala)	1916-26	60	38	-	2
2. Kala Gaddi Thamman (Lyallpur)	1912-25	87	13	-	-
3. Durrana-Langana (Multan)	1919-38	-	50	50	-

Source : Village Surveys.

Interestingly, while efforts by government at checking the problem of indebtedness itself were hardly noticeable, at the end of the 1920s, a massive debate ensued, in government circles, regarding the state of moneylenders in the province, their role and, attitude to be adopted towards them. It may be recalled that as early as 1898, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab had cautioned against any serious restriction of moneylenders' activities in view of the serious political implications of such a step. It was felt that interference would invite the wrath of both the moneylender and the agriculturist.[82] That, even while passing legislation government did not wish to go too much against them was made clear by the Banking Enquiry which observed that they, in fact, constituted "the most important financing agency of the province."[83] In 1928-29 there were about 19,000 moneylenders in the province, and one out of every four tax-payers in Punjab was a moneylender. In fact, many who appeared before the Provincial banking enquiry, argued that the moneylender was "far more supreme at present than he was about thirty years back".[84] While co-operative societies, agriculturist moneylenders and so on had affected his business to some degree, they had

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82. Rev.Agri.Rev., November 1898, A.Pro.3-22,F.27,of 1896.

83. BECR, op.cit., p.12.

84. PPBECR, op.cit., p.383.

not "affected his supremacy..."[85] It was pointed out that moneylenders did have to wind up in Sikh and Arain Villages but this had only spurred them on to move to town to open commission shops etc., there, and by extending the scope of their activities. Some even emphasised that even in a district like Lyallpur, "the supremacy of the moneylender is there, it has not decreased."[86] Darling drew the attention of the Agricultural Commission to the fact that while in some Colonies there was a tendency for the sāhukār to migrate to the town, on the other hand, rapid Colonisation in Montgomery "set up a brisk demand for capital, and the moneylender found ample scope for his activity."[87]

The depression too, though it affected recoveries and accentuated the risk factor in terms of bad debts, is likely to have led cultivators to move over to moneylenders again since their mode of transacting debt is more likely to have withstood the onslaught of depression than that of agriculturist moneylenders of the official agencies.

It needs to be noted here that even though this period saw a rise in the activities of agriculturist moneylenders also, the anger of the peasant seems to have been

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85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., p.401.

87. RCA, 1927, op.cit., p.593

directed more easily against the professional moneylender. Many stated in their evidence before the provincial banking enquiry that sentiment against moneylenders was building up, as a result of which too many moneylenders were shifting to towns. There were even references to dacoities etc.[88]

Darling and other officials, ascribed part of this building up of hostility to the fact that as far as professional moneylenders were concerned, the relationship of the debtor-creditor at once coincided with a sharp caste/community distinction also. Most professional moneylending in Punjab was in the hands of three castes: the Baniā, the Khatri and the Arorā, all three being Hindu. Professionals apart, the fact was that almost the whole amount advanced on credit in Punjab was advanced by Hindus, or at best Sikhs, while well over half of the debt of the Province had been incurred by Muslims. Forming 57% of the rural population, Muslims owed approximately 80 crores out of a total rural debt of 135 crore rupees in the Province.[89] The moneylending castes were the butt of many a proverb in central and western Punjab.

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88. PPBECR, op.cit., p.388. There are exceptions though. Thus in many places the moneylenders were seen as the 'Saviours' Cf. A.R.Samundri, op.cit., p.17

89. Darling, 1925, op.cit., p.21.

Thus the Khatri had earned for himself the following reputation : Je Khatri Sir Khen Pāwe;

to bhi Khatri Khatt Lidwe

(even if a khatri puts ashes on his head, he will make a profit).

The Arorā was no less infamous : Kān, Kirār, Kute dā Visāh nā kije sute dā

(even if they sleep, do not trust a cow, a Kirār or a dog).

In the villages, moneylenders often worked in close association with landlords more so since it was to the landlords that moneylenders turned for protection of their life and property. There was a kind of mutual dependence based on some commonality of interests, though this did not rule out conflict between the two.[90]

The question of mortgage was closely linked to that of alienation, sale of land, and price of land. We have earlier mentioned that incidence of mortgage went up in the Colony districts after 1912, subsequent on the grant of proprietory rights to Colonies. This was closely followed by rise in mortgage value of land, and a general increase in the price of land. Enhanced value of agricultural land enlarged the credit of landowners, making it

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90. PPBECR, op.cit., p.221.

easier to raise funds. Government saw increased expenditure as a consequence of this enlarged credit:

> Litigation, the consumption of intoxicants, extravagence in marriage ceremonies and so forth are all becoming more fashionable. Expenditure on such objects affected in varying and probably in increasing degree the financial condition of nearly all classes of agriculturists, except the very necessitous and, it certainly is a contributive factor of considerable strength in the increase of mortgage debt.91

This was the general tenor of the official argument, although none less than the Financial Commissioner himself conceded at this time that increase in debt and, alienation, consequent upon mortgage was not due to such habits or expenditure alone. Thus it was at the same time recognised that the dealings of the Punjab agriculturists were, "on a more ample money scale than they were formerly," so that "occassional failure of such process owing to adverse climatic conditions or other reasons lands the cultivators in a greater deficit than formerly."[92]

The trend towards increasing alienation of land and increase in value of land were by no means exclusive to the Colony regions. As early as 1889 Ibbetson had drawn attention to the fact that :

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91. LRARP, 1920, p.18.

92. Ibid., Financial Commissioner's Review.

> Our legal system not only affords facilities for enforcing alienations, but actually brings an unjust and one-sided pressure to bear upon the peasant, which eventually force him to part with his land.... 93

But Colonisation affected the situation in so far as by drawing a vast mass of peasantry into a network of more generalised commodity production, it also enhanced their vulnerability in view of a greater volume of money and commercial transactions. This opened up new vistas for prosperity and for ruin. In so far as the financial foundations of the economy of this region were neither stable nor of long standing, the possibility of the emergence of a land market spelt ruin for a very large section of the rural population; this was particularly dangerous in as much as it was couched in a garb of apparent prosperity and rising production.

It was not just Colonisation, but even the prospect of canal irrigation influenced economic processes and perception. The Deputy Commissioner, Shahpur, provided an illustration of this. Early in 1896 he wrote that in the last five years a large part of the Bār land has, "passed by purchase into the hands of land speculators, chiefly moneylenders of Bhera and Miani towns."[94] This activity, he elaborated, was prompted by the hope that

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93. GOI, Judicial, Dec. 1891, A pro, 234-300.

94. Rev. Agri. Rev., March 1896, A. pro. 10, F. 16.

soon the Lower Jhelum Canal would be constructed, which meant that Bār land would become canal-irrigated and therefore, valuable, even though Bār lands in their then existing state did not command much value, "speculators offered tempting prices to the unthrifty cattle owners."[95] The Bār owners, still more of a pastoral than the agricultural type, yielded to the temptation and sold some portion of their land mostly uncultivated, grazing land, generally in the form of a share in the undivided common, carrying with it a right to exclusive possession of a large area when partition was carried out. Subsequently, construction of the canal was postponed, causing speculation to fall off considerably; meanwhile the Bār owners, had "got to know how valuable their land may become and had generally got wiser."[96]

While the Colonies' report also talked of free use being made in Shahpur, of the power of alienation given by the Colony Act, it would be wrong to conclude from this that the emergence of a land market was proceeding along a uniform and even pattern, and having a similar impact everywhere.[97] Thus in the Thal circle in the same district, till as late as 1905, anyone who desired to own land had only to go ahead

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95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. PCR, Shahpur, 1912-13.

and cultivate as much waste as he could. Even at the time of the 1915 assessment, a squatter had no difficulty in obtaining possession of land, provided he paid the revenue for it. Change, of course, was taking over here as well and it was noticed that, "the villagers are at last beginning to realise the value of their land" and were likely to evict squatters before long.[98]

While Shahpur, or atleast parts of it, certainly, lagged behind, Gujranwala, Jhang and Multan were by 1913, among the districts which recorded the largest area sold. The district reports observed that while the figures for Jhang and Gujranwala seemed extraordinarily swollen because of the inclusion of sale of proprietory rights in Colony lands by Government, it was a fact that sales in old villages were also "numerous".[99] In Multan, the process of alienation had begun much earlier, and the Commissioner reported that on the Sidhnai, "one-third of the Colony had already passed out of the hands of the original grantees by the early 1900s."[100]

Lest there be any doubt on the matter, the Land Revenue Administration Report clearly mentioned that by 1915, Lahore, Gujranwala, Montgomery and Lyallpur had all,

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98. A.R., Khushab, 1915, op.cit., para 34.

99. LRARP, 1913, p.15.

100. Canal Colonies' Committee Report, op.cit., p.790.

recorded an increase in land transfers as a result of debt-mortgage.[101] Again in 1920, of the eleven districts which recorded the largest sales of cultivated area in Punjab, four, viz., Multan, Montgomery, Jhang and Lyallpur were Colony districts.[102] This general trend continued and subsequent Land Revenue Administration reports reflected this.

However, the fact that alienation and transfer of land were going on, does not convey much in itself. The question remains as to who was selling, who to and what prompted the sale? Was the sale a speculative transaction, or was it a last ditch attempt by a cultivator to gain freedom from debt? Did the latter even exercise any choice in the matter of transaction?

Information on this count is extremely inadequate. The village surveys for Gujranwala and Lyallpur in fact rule out the notion that poor peasants were losing land to rich peasants, landowners, or moneylenders. In Gajju Chak, over a period of twenty years, no small owners - holding less than 5 acres of cultivated land - had lost land by sale. Two non-residents sold out completely but three small-holders increased their holdings by purchasing land within the same period, one of whom, a government servant, rose to being the largest owner with 78 acres

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101. LRARP, 1915, p.12.

102. LRARP, 1920, p.17.

Table 6.5

Sales to Agriculturists and Non-Agriculturists - Lyallpur District 1923-24 to 1932-33

Year	Lyallpur Tahsil			Samundri Tahsil			Toba Tek Singh Tahsil			Chunian Colony		
	Cultivated area (in acres)	Sale money (Rs.)	Average per acre (Rs.)	Cultivated area (in acres)	Sale money (Rs.)	Average per acre (Rs.)	Cultivated area (in acres)	Sale money (Rs.)	Average per acre (Rs.)	Cultivated area (in acres)	Sale money (Rs.)	Average per acre (Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
To Agriculturists												
Upto 1923-24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1923-24	924	6,99,161	735- 3- 0	925	3,73,393	356	1,067	6,89,474	630- 3- 9	726	5,31,429	656
1924-25	1,788	14,98,555	817-15-10	877	4,99,667	543	1,075	12,99,737	1,127- 4- 3	328	4,12,321	697
1925-26	1,358	10,78,788	760-12- 6	1,524	8,30,813	510	1,378	9,45,206	661-14- 7	494	2,94,586	583
1926-27	1,166	9,40,423	767- 1- 1	987	6,73,918	626	1,633	18,28,302	1,994-12- 8	1,669	10,68,444	587
1927-28	1,296	10,06,157	741- 7- 4	1,248	8,17,429	610	1,499	9,14,868	577- 9-10	442	2,79,436	613
1928-29	1,165	8,11,195	675- 6-11	1,068	5,96,725	529	1,218	6,98,836	552- 0- 1	437	1,92,924	423
1929-30	830	5,67,221	672- 1- 0	904	5,32,237	569	1,203	5,81,077	471-10- 5	456	2,21,768	479
1930-31	1,159	6,51,210	534-10- 6	764	3,82,166	454	1,025	4,49,176	410- 3- 4	572	2,28,163	360
1931-32	931	4,17,364	432-15- 2	671	3,32,292	374	757	3,09,626	383- 3- 2	378	1,39,736	358
1932-33	603	2,72,917	431- 2- 5	1,132	4,21,663	357	1,230	3,54,145	279- 1- 2	543	1,71,536	304
Total upto 1932-33	11,215	79,42,991	682- 2- 5	10,100	54,60,303	497	12,085	80,70,447	640- 9- 0	6,295	35,40,393	999
Deduct Area Redeemed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Total at end of 1932-33	11,215	79,42,991	682- 2- 5	10,100	54,60,303	497	12,085	80,70,447	640- 9 - 0			

Table 6.5 contd...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
To Non-Agriculturists		Lyallpur Tahsil			Samundri Tahsil			Toba Tek Singh Tahsil			Chunian Colony	
Upto 1923-24	-	-	-	-	-	-						
1923-24	17	10,400	611-12- 3	6	6,200	1,033	-	-	-	-	-	-
1924-25	185	2,15,700	1,141- 4- 4	158	84,700	533	189	90,900	362- 2- 5	2	6,000	1,000
1925-26	3	63,500	6,875- 0- 0	33	37,400	1,039	188	1,62,400	841- 7- 3	-	-	-
1926-27	628	5,33,320	805- 9-11	40	17,824	405	148	1,20,044	750- 4- 5	-	-	-
1927-28	29	1,88,699	2,388- 9- 6	48	24,694	514	94	96,218	882-11- 9	-	-	-
1928-29	85	73,917	739- 2- 9	79	58,480	650	99	86,930	869- 4-10	27	28,944	905
1929-30	201	1,56,076	712-10-10	28	16,592	592	605	4,53,321	667-10- 1	29	17,500	603
1930-31	-	9,979	907- 2-11	137	55,950	350	420	2,19,303	459-12- 1	121	51,500	396
1931-32	259	1,81,975	673-15- 8	82	38,179	415	334	3,04,460	838-11- 9	14	4,800	342
1932-33	307	1,56,762	488- 5- 8	115	73,138	457	171	1,10,510	587-13- 1	293	48,497	179
Total upto 1932-33	1,764	15,90,328	849- 8- 6	726	4,13,157	502	371	2,03,630	522- 2- 1	34	9,974	292
Deduct Area Redeemed	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,669	18,47,716	634-15- 3	320	1,77,215	1,187
Total at the end of 1932-33	1,764	15,90,328	849- 8- 6	726	4,13,157	502	2,669	18,47,716	634-15- 3			

Source :- A.R., Lyallpur, op.cit.
A.R., Samundri op.cit.
A.R., Toba Tek Singh, op.cit.
A.R., Chunian Colony, op.cit.

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of cultivated land. No instance was recorded in the village, of a sale to redeem a mortgage on other land.[103]

In Kala Gaddi Thamman again, none of the sales transacted represented the small owner, being pushed off his land. In all cases, buyers and sellers were owners of more than twenty-five acres, and the purchasers were all Jat Sikh landowners of the same village. But here again, no land was sold to redeem a mortgage.[104] Interestingly, in this village, in 1925-26 government sold a piece of land about 10 acres in area, which had previously been cultivated by kamins.[105]

Durrana Langana, however, was a different case altogether. Out of 941 acres sold in the village, 843 acres were purchased by the Dehar landlord family alone while one moneylender, an Arora, purchased the land of his debtor. Between 1900 and 1925, fifteen owners in the village had sold off their lands completely and become landless labourers. Of these thirteen had sold their land directly to the Dehar landlord. Thirty-three owners sold part of their less than 5 acres holdings to the Dehar landlord. Many of these became tenants-at-will or took to working as casual labour. Between 1925 and 1926

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103. BETP, PVS, 6, op.cit., p.137

104. BETP, PVS, 4, op.cit., p.85.

105. Ibid.

Table 6.6

Sales to Agriculturists and Non-agriculturists
(Punjab)

Quinquennium	Percentage of Total Sales	
	To Agriculturists	To Non-agriculturists
Average of 1875-78*	62	38
Average of 1879-83	68	32
Average of 1884-88	69	31
Average of 1889-93	79	21
1901-6 to 1905-1906	71	29
1905-1906 to 1910-11	75	25
1911-12 to 1915-16	81	19
1916-17 to 1920-21	81	19
1921-22 to 1925-26	79	21
1926-27 to 1930-31	73	27
1931-32 to 1935-36	70	30
1936-37 to 1940-41	75	25
1941-42 to 1945-46	75	25
1945-46 to 1950-51	83	17

*Average of four years.

Source: Figures upto 1893 from Land Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), Oct. 1895, A, 72-73 subsequent figs. from LRARP, relevant years.

and 1935 and 1936 again, eight landowners holding less than five acres of cultivated land sold all or part of their lands in one or more sales transactions while one, owing more than five acres reduced it to far less by successive sales and took to cultivating on batai. At the same time, there was no instance in the village of anyone owningless than five acres of cultivated land purchasing any land over a period of thirty-seven years. The investigators recorded that in 20 out of 34 instances of sale the cause had, either wholly or partly been the need to pay off debt.[106]

Most of the district reports noted that land was fast changing hands all through this period. In Gugera, Montgomery, 41 per cent of the area had been sold to new agriculturists by 1894, of which "the area sold to persons of the moneylending class must actually have been somewhat large".[107] In Khushab, Shahpur, similarly "original owners were being rapidly dispossessed".[108] In Chunian colony, many looked towards the co-operative societies, "to protect the small men from the big who were looking forward to eating them up as soon as proprietory right should become a marketable property".[109] In Lahore

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106. BEIP, PVS, 11, op.cit., p.155.

107. A.R. Gugera 1894, op.cit., para 92.

108. A.R.Khushab, 1915, op.cit., para 33.

109. A.R. Chunian Colony, 1915, op.cit., para 87.

district area sold in depressed villages was "considerable" even though tremendous value was attached to land and sales were avoided to the last; at the same time in prosperous villages, there were "practically no sales of land in the whole period since last settlement".[110] In Sharaqpur tahsil, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the land had changed hands over a period of forty years.[111] While reports streamed in of the pace at which land was changing hands, officials did not find transfer figures, "disquieting".[112] In fact it was repeatedly argued that "sales by one agriculturist to another only means that a competent farmer takes the place of an incompetent one..."[113]

This, however, should not be taken to mean that all sales transactions reflected the poverty of the agricultural community. In fact the following features stand out clearly in this period: (a) land presented itself at this time as one of the best forms of commercial investment; (b) considerable social value was attached to the ownership of lands; (c) ready money, to be invested in land, was available not only with speculators and moneylenders, but also rich and middle strata cultivators.

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110. A.R. Lahore, 1939, p.9.

111. A.R. Sharakpur, Gujranwala, op.cit., p.16.

112. S.R.Gujranwala, 1927.

113. A.R. Khushab, 1915, op.cit., para 33.

This prosperity of a section of agriculturists was as much reflected in land sales, as the poverty and distress of another section. Nothing illustrates this better than the auction sales that government organised from time to time. A study of reports available on auction sales indicates that by the 1900s, land purchasers at auctions could easily be said to fall in two categories. On the one hand there were the auction-purchasers, the capitalists, who framed before they came to the auction, "a fair estimate of the return which would be earned by investing capital in the various Chaks offered for sale; "their estimate was based on a calculation of the cash rent for which a square would be leased. This class of purchasers did not find it profitable to acquire small areas and generally wanted ten to twelve squares if not an entire chak."[114] While the desire of their class to buy land is reflective of the profits anticipated by them in agriculture, the case of the second category is even more revealing, these were the small buyers, often self-cultivators, offering competition to the first category.

Reporting on the sales in Chunian Colony, the Financial Commissioner commented on the "almost complete failure of the capitalists to compete with real zamindars who possess smaller means but are able to obtain higher

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114. Rev.Agri.Irri., December 1902, B.Pro.28, F.2.

profits from the land."[115] The Lahore Division Commissioner confirmed that in 1906, large capitalists were able to secure only a very small area, while they had to face "keen competition" and "fancy prices".[116] The purchasers ultimately were Lahore barristers, Jat Sikhs, Kambohs, Hindu and Muslims, and two Khattris. The cultivator purchasers, it was found, "came fully provided with money, and in many cases, they paid 20 per cent of their bids on the spot in order to get possession", while the "city men were altogether outbid from the start".[117] The officials supervising the auction gathered that while the city men had made up their minds that purchase "at more than Rs. 150 per acre would not yield a fair commercial profit" and they expected the lands to go at that price, the cultivators were "prepared to give more" and did pay between Rs.390 and Rs.450 per acre for the Rakh Chor for instance.[118] This should not lead us to conclude that purchase by capitalist was totally ruled out in these auction sales.

What emerges from this report is also the fact that both, affluent sections within the peasantry, as well as

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115. Rev.Agri.Rev., April 1906, A.Pro.9, F.125.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

urban residents were at this time interested in buying land in the Colony regions, as well as the fact that they were guided by a motive of anticipated economic gains. The Banking Enquiry Committee observed that land hunger in Punjab "had become almost a mania", and went on to quite statistics to show that between 1926-31, nearly six-and-a-half crore rupees had been paid, and many more promised, for Canal Colony land in the Punjab, Bahawalpur and Bikaner.[119] These, it may be pointed out, included the depression years. The land hunger seems to have been pressed on by the fact that given the absence of development of industry or non-agriculture based commercial activity, land ownership offered the main channel for investment of capital that was accumulated. For the agriculturist in any case, land was a "great asset" and even the holder of the poorest field was proud of it, which also made him hold on to it till such time as sale was absolutely unavoidable.

All these factors contributed to an almost consistent increase in price of land. The settlement report for Jhang noted that till not so long ago much of the land in the district had "sold for a mere song".[120] With the advent of canal irrigation, not only had price of

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119. BECR, op.cit., p.145.

120. SR, Jhang, 1906, op.cit., p.16.



land increased phenomenally, but the "divergence of the recorded from the actual price was also greater."[121] In the province as a whole, the Land Alienation Act had contributed to increase in price of land but in the Colonies, for up to the first decade of the twentieth century, restriction on alienation kept prices low for the moment.[122]

Nevertheless, the following features stand out: (a) there was a comparative equality/proximity between sale price and mortgage price which substantiated district reports' contention that usually the poorest land was sold.[123] This of course did not include sales by absentee landlords, mainly capitalists and auction purchasers and army pensioners, as in the case of a large number of sales in Lyallpur district.[124] (b) That while much can be argued on the basis of a rise in the average price of land, the 'average' was no indicator since the value of land varied considerably. In much of Colony districts as well as the central districts of Punjab, land was selling at a price approximating or even above Rs.1,000 while the provincial average was Rs.275 per acre in 1919-20.[125]

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121. Ibid., p.15

122. LRARP, 1909, p.2.

123. LRARP, 1914, p.12.

124. Ibid., p.11.

125. LRARP, 1920, p.19.

(c) The variation in price was a result of various factors - quality, soil of land, rainfall, availability of water, proximity to a market, distance from railway line, whether situated at the tail of a distributary; whether the land was surrounded by immigrant colonists or it lay in a Jangli chak or a Muslim-dominated village and so on.[126] (d) Apart from a general increase in price of land, specific factors also influenced the movement from time to time. Rise in agricultural commodity prices, increased speculation in the market, or even pressure to invest in government's war loans - all these affected movement of land prices. (e) A slump and consequent tightness in the money market too had their impact. But what is essential to note here is that in Punjab there was a steady rise in the price of land even during depression years, with 1928-29 being the sole exception. While this seems paradoxical, it only underlines the point made earlier, that in an environment of limited scope for investment, purchase of land still seemed an attractive proposition for those who exercised the option at all.[127] For those at the other end of the sale transaction the thrust of Ibbetson's observation in 1891 was still valid:

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126. Rev.Agri.Genl., March 1915, A.Pro.7, F.20.

127. LRARP, 1931, p.27.

> ...our legal system not only affords facilities for enforcing alienations, but actually brings an unjust and one-sided pressure to bear upon the peasant, which eventually forces him to part with his land...[128]

Conclusion

To conclude we may make note of the following trends. Firstly, the volume of debt and the incidence of debt were both on the rise in the Canal Colonies in this period. While the former affected the richer sections of the peasantry, the high incidence of debt particularly affected the lower strata. This debt was largely owed to moneylenders who fell in two categories, agriculturist and non-agriculturist. In the Canal Colonies the years up to mid-1920s saw an increase in debt owed to agriculturist moneylenders but subsequently, during the depression a shift to professional moneylenders was again visible. The same pattern was reflected in mortgage and land sale patterns. Debt transactions with moneylenders, particularly agriculturists, in the Colonies were almost always a lever that the latter used to increase area under cultivation. This was a direct consequence of rising prices which rendered cultivation of commercial crops an advantageous proposition. Professional moneylenders, although not directly interested in the production aspect also preferred debts with mortgage since control over the

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128. GOI, Judicial, December 1891, A.Pro. 234-300.

produce facilitated their commercial activities which increased considerably during this period. In view of the problem of increasing indebtedness the role played by government agencies - under the aegis of '<u>takāvi</u>' - or government sponsored agencies such as co-operatives was marginal. While the latter gained some support and momentum in the Canal Colonies the co-operative movement also encountered resistance from the moneylending and commercial classes. Lastly, government's legislative sanctions against professional moneylenders proved inadequate, more so when combined with a veiled concern for them in view of its eagerness to not disturb the prevailing social order. As in the case of the trends noted in previous chapters with regard to prices and trade, and in the context of tenant-landlord relationships, the depression gave a set back to many of the positive, even when nascent, trends with regard to debt and land transfer. Although it would be absurd to conclude from this that the eastern Indian pattern came to be replicated here, it is true that while the large landowning as well as rich peasant sections emerged relatively unscathed from the depression, the poor peasants, in view of their enhanced vulnerability to factors beyond their control, were faced with ruin, and reduced to wage slavery.

SUMMING UP AND CONCLUSIONS

The subject of this study has been the vast scheme of agricultural colonisation launched by the British in Western Punjab in the late nineteenth century. The construction of several hundred miles of canals which brought perennial irrigation to the vast arid wastes in this region changed the face of the country. It was not as if prior to Colonisation these lands were totally unpopulated and uncultivated. On the contrary these lands had been home of numerous tribes and people who subsisted on grazing as well as cultivation. In fact even in pre-British days irrigation by means of natural inundation or wells had formed an important feature of the regional economy in this largely rainless tract. The rivers and riverain lands occupied a prominent place in such an economic set-up, a fact that was recognised by the rulers since the days of the Mughals who initiated the earliest scheme for canal irrigation, which was later continued by the Sikh rulers and other chieftains. The nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled cultivators continued a somewhat placid life, with possibility of any grave, long-lasting conflict being ruled out by the fact of availability of vast grazing lands. The construction of canals by the British let loose

a whole chain of processes, reactions, institutions, rules all of which had a defined purpose and which were largely alien to the rhythm of life in this region prior to the advent of perennial irrigation.

Above all else, Colonisation made the presence of the State and State machinery an all-pervasive factor in the life of the peasant. This was reflected in various forms in a very physical sense—starting from the advent of state-built and controlled canals, to the allotments, often on condition, to peasants for cultivation; the application of new laws and law courts exercised a kind of authority and struck awe which customary processess neither did nor could. Various processes, discussed in previous chapters, came to exercise an influence on the life of the peasant, and changed his life in a very real sense, both at the level of economic status as reflected in the statistics government published annually, and in his day-to-day dealings with those he interacted with. This involved a question of 'perceived' status as well, since existing social relationships underwent a vast change as Colonisation proceeded. While on the one hand at the economic level far-reaching changes were coming about, at the social level all established norms of behaviour, self-perception of status, values and of relations with others faced a challenge

with the advent of immigrants who came to occupy a predominant position both in terms of their numerical presence, as well as the economic resources at their disposal.

The influx of a mass of immigrants from central and eastern Punjab added a whole new dimension. Matters were further complicated by the fact that these changes, aimed at development, often adversely affected the fortunes of the old settlers. Many found that traditional sources of water and irrigation supply had dried up. The river no longer flowed as of old, spreading its bounty with the flotsam. First the rivers and the numerous streams and channels dried up, prompting tenants to leave; very soon the subsoil water level started to rise at an alarming rate — rendering wells useless and resulting in efflorescence in the soil — making cultivation well nigh impossible and even compelling proprietors to move out of their lands. Even as these and several other negative aspects began to surface, official effort concentrated on publicising the grand irrigation schemes and their gains. The achievements of Colonisation were sung all over the land, how water had been reached to the rainless tracts, how the wastes were populated, and how the 'criminal' Jangli had been replaced by the superior agriculturists of central Punjab. (Chapter I)

While the old settlers drew attention to problems stemming from Colonisation, the Punjab government began to gloat over its swelling coffers. For, canal irrigation and Colonisation of West Punjab was proving to be a paying proposition. The initial, faltering steps in canal construction taken after several years of policy debate regarding the feasibility of canal irrigation — where was the money to come from, whether canals were to be built under the heads of protective or productive works, what was to be the nature of returns that could be expected, if at all, were all forgotton, once the initial outlay brought in handsome returns. The focus of debate shifted at once from who was going to foot the bill for canal construction, to who was going to pocket the financial receipts, the Provincial government or the Imperial exchequer? The matter was finally settled in the form of a multiplicity of charges on the cultivator which were diverted to different departments.

Once quibbling over the money was over, there was a scramble for land and allotments. The initial objective of canal irrigation was improvement of agriculture which was to be combined with relieving pressure on the congested districts of Central Punjab: hence the three categories of grantees, capitalist, yeoman and peasant. Judging by

initial professed objectives, Colonisation was hardly a success but the fact is that soon after allotments began various other interests and objectives came to the fore. Thus the army staked its claims to a large part of the land to breed camels, horses and mules to meet pressing needs of the imperial army. The Manchester-Lancashire lobby pressed for 'Cotton' grants to meet the shortfall of raw cotton after the American civil war. Political interests had to be considered. Thus large landowning families who had in the past stood by government in its hour of need and who pledged to do so in future, had to be rewarded; the sagging fortunes of the landed gentry had to be lent support and above all, those who had and were likely to make a contribution through military service had to be rewarded for Punjab had to continue its glorious 'martial' traditions. World War I drove the point home more sharply. Allotments, initially conceived of within the confines of the schedule of agricultural and non-agricultural classes of the Punjab Land Alienation Bill, soon overstepped the limits in accommodation of various interests. The desire to also attract capital and capitalists from non-agricultural classes extended this further.

The outcome of allotment policy was revealing in terms of the categories, classes and castes which gained.

While the Sikh Jat peasantry of Central Punjab came out strong, the worst sufferers, were the Janglis, Hitharis and other old settlers especially the poor peasantry amongst the Muslims. The prevalence of a caste-based occupational or status division and its preservation as well as reinforcement by the British contained within it the seeds of future conflict. The old settlers, cultivators and graziers, being divested of their customary and traditional rights in the lands initially appropriated as crown wastes and subsequently sold as Colony land to grantees, added to the grievances of the old settlers. Once again, they were directly hit by state action and the suffering was compounded by the denial to all peasant grantees of proprietory rights on Colony lands. (Chapter II)

While tightening its grip over Colony lands government also sought to increase the financial returns. Reassessment of land at higher revenue rates, increase in the heads of charges collected, and higher estimates of yield and net produce so as to arrive at a much higher proportion of net assets which formed the basis of calculation of net revenue were an exercise repeated at each settlement. The government claimed its rightful share in the increased prosperity of the region making it clear that this prosperity was directly a result of state action. Security of irrigation supply

and rising prices formed its justification for higher demand. The peasantry pointed to the continued uncertainly of canal supply, sepecially in the tail chaks mostly belonging to Janglis. The more well-placed cultivators cajoled the subordinate canal bureaucracy to give them more than their due of canal water while charging less. Kharābā remissions, like fluctuating assessment, remained a bone of contention. For government it was clearly a case of not just maintaining revenue returns, but of maintaining a continuously rising rate of return whereas in the case of the richer peasants it was a struggle for retaining for itself a share of the surplus. The poor peasant, discriminated against in allotments, then in assessment and canal supply, and generally denied his due share of Kharābā, struggled for survival.(Chapter III).

While the first part of this study examines the Colonisation process in the context of administrative measures directly undertaken by the state, in the second part we explore the impact and outcome of Colonisation in terms of the economic processes that were set off. While on the one hand cropping patterns, rotation and agricultural methods were affected by the introduction of canal irrigation; the timing and cycle of water supply, the revenue and irrigation charges levied as well as the

conditional grants made, all favoured a specific pattern with Rabi predominating over Kharif and secondly, the predominance of wheat and cotton cultivation. Both these crops were grown primarily for the market and these years saw a rapid spread of the market and commercial enterprise in the region. The upper strata of the peasantry found itself more advantageously placed vis-a-vis the market. Having more to sell in the first place, they could bide their time to command a better price, were better off in terms of means of transport and generally more well-informed regarding market trends and fluctuations. The poorer strata of the peasantry, as inescapably caught in the market network, was integrated at a different level altogether. Few could directly sell their produce in the market or expect to get a high price for their produce. Hardly any possessed the means to transport the crop to the market, while the cart-owners who transported it were usually in league with the arhtiās, dalāls and other intermediaries in the commercial network who combined to cut into the price due to the peasant. At the level of market structure and organisation too the small cultivator found a whole series of factors weighing against him. If he was in debt then the village shopkeeper, the local sāhukār, or the landlord could gain control of the produce

cutting off all possibilities of him getting a fair price for the produce, Even when not in debt, prevalent market practices acted against him. The nature of communication services available in the region while greatly facilitating commercial development and encouraging a high level of commercial enterprise and organisation in the region did not necessarily work to the advantage of the small landholder. These years saw an increase in commercial enterprise-forming a link between the village shopkeeper and big export firms in Karachi but with sub-stations, advancing agents, out stations, joint stock banks, and a whole chain of small and big time dalāls and other intermediaries in the mandis etc. These in fact seem to have made the most of the price boom from the 1900's onwards, especially the second and third decade of the century, upto the depression. However, in these very years when there were possibilites of greater benefit from rising prices to the actual cultivator, as in the years of the first world war, the colonial state directly intervened to act against it. The wheat scheme implemented primarily in the years 1915 to 1919 was a classic example of government acting so as to regulate prices when imperial interests were involved; thus it resiled from the late-nineteenth century principled 'non-interventionist' stance

which had been maintained in the face of even the severest drought and scarcity price situation.

While the period under study saw a rapid and close integration with the international market, a sort of regional economic pattern could be traced. It is clear that the Canal Colony tracts were more directly linked by the market to international trends and network than to an internal market. Production in the region was also consequently geared to export. The years saw a rapid rise in the importance of Karachi as an export centre for wheat primarily and also cotton. The level of price linkeage between international markets and Lyallpur was fairly high. However, this very pattern of economic development contained within it serious hazards. These soon came to surface when the impact of the Depression came to be felt. The price slump had a deep, wide-ranging impact on the Colonies and its cultivators since the uneven and imbalanced regional development within Punjab and the low integration of the Colony tracts with the internal market exposed them with full force to the devastation of Depression years. While the small and poor peasants of the region had not been in a position to reap the advantages of the 'boom' years. they were exposed with greater vulnerability to the slump. (Chapter IV)

The impact of Colonisation in its socio-economic aspect of tenancy and indebtedness was equally complex. Tenancy was not unknown in this region prior to Colonisation. But the first decades of this century saw a sizeable portion of colony lands passing into the hands of tenant cultivators on cash and kind rents. This pattern emerged with variation in extent in almost all the districts. While the pre-Depression years also saw a slight increase in land leased on cash rents, this was not a continuous trend, and was certainly reversed during the Depression years which also saw a reversal to Khudkāsht in some of the Colony districts. Apart from the trends relating to cultivating occupancy, these years marked an increased intensity in struggle over the rent between tenants and owners. While these years saw the rise of owner tenants who leased in land in order to increase area under cultivation, it also saw a rise in the number of poor peasant - tenant holdings. Undoubtedly the latter were at this time engaged in a struggle for control over the produce with landlords. This struggle was enacted in different stages and at different levels, beginning with the form of rent itself. Thus at a time when prices were rising and rent rates prevailing were still comparatively low, tenants favoured

low cash rents. This was generally resisted by landlords who all through this period were pushing for kind rents on half*batai* terms, an advance on earlier, lower produce rents. Along with struggle over form and rate of the 'formal' rent component, the struggle over share in produce was fought out in parts spreading over the entire process of harvesting, division of the crop, division of fodder, deductions for menials and other sharing of expenses. The years saw a steady rise in rent appropriated by the landlords by means of pushing on to the tenant charges which were either their responsibility or shared by both. Whatever laxity may have prevailed in earlier years. was dealt a blow by the Depression when landlords adopted more rigid postures, even when forced by circumstances to postpone actual appropriation of rent. (Chapter V)

The decline in the status of tenants and other poor and small peasants was even more clearly reflected in the increasing debt burden of agriculturlists. As the commercial network widened and deepened, cash needs of peasants increased, driving them deeper into the clutches of moneylenders. While an increasing debt burden was interpreted as a sign of prosperity by official commentators, the fact was that for the small and poor peasants whose vulnerability

increased with greater penetration of the money economy, debt was a further and often the last step towards landlessness. While agriculturist moneylenders saw in advancing loans against landmortgage a convenient means of acquiring land cheap for cultivation, for the professional moneylenders the compounding of interest itself ensured that the cultivator was not likely to escape from his clutches. The pre-Depression years saw an expansion in debt owed to agriculturist moneylenders; This did not necessarily imply a decline in the prosperity of professional moneylenders. They in fact took the opportunity to branch out into other forms of commercial activity extending into towns. Attempts to promote co-operatives in the region could register only partial success and met with active resistance from moneylenders in combination with arhtiās. The Depression intervened to rehabilitate the moneylender since they were more willing to advance loans on seemingly 'lenient' terms which, though disastrous in the long-run, seemed lax in such stringent circumstances. (Chapter VI)

Thus the Colonies, projected as the model for agrarian development, and constantly referred to as revealing the positive side of imperialism, in fact saw development of some trends which were essentially not

very different from other parts of the country. Despite favourable indices for crop acreages, value of output, exports, financial returns to government etc., the social fabric being woven through the web of colonial policy combined with class differentiation was not very different. The state was no neutral bystander in these series of developmental changes. In fact as pointed out earlier, nowhere was the all-pervasive hand of colonial intervention more visible than in the Canal Colonies. It was therefore not surprising that these years saw a steady building up of a movement directed against state policy. This is not to argue that class-based tensions did not exist. Far from it. But the overbearing presence of the state and the impact of its policies definitely caused widespread resentment to build up.

From the early 1890's itself, resentment against government policies found political expression. The years 1905 to 1907 saw a massive agitation in the Colonies, directed against government. The immediate occasion for this was provided by the Colonies' Bill adopted by the Punjab Legislative Council in 1906. The provisions of the Bill, kept secret and colonists receiving no official communication, gave rise to further suspicion and speculation about it. The main issues of concern to the Colonists were (a) the

denial of proprietary rights to peasant grantees and (b) the proposed imposition of the condition of primogenture on all horse-breeding and similar conditional grants. The passage of the bill caused further resentment since it coincided with the announcement of a rise in water-rates for canal-irrigation.[1] There developed a basic distrust in government and all things connected with government in various social classes and communities including those who had benefitted from its policies except the large landowners. This distrust was reflected in various actions by the people, as well as in their perception. An intelligence report in 1907 noted that :

> the mood of the people is apparently such that they distort the most innocent act of the government into a deliberate design to cause them injury . 2

People were urged to dissociate themselves from all government actions and functioning, in a spirit, partially reminiscent of the Swadeshi movement, though on a miniscule level and of the non-cooperation movement later. This included boycotting officials on tour, not seeking government office or favour and so on. A seemingly innocent act such as a Deputy Commissioner's refusal of

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1. Cf. Barrier, 1966.

2. Home Pol., Aug. 1907, Pro 141, B, W.R.

permission to hold wrestling matches was interpreted as reflective of government's intention to "effeminate the people so that they may not be in a position to rise against it". [3]

The report of the Colonies' Committee, the scrapping of the 1906 Canal Colonies' Bill and the grant of major concessions in the final Bill passed in 1912 — grant of proprietory rights to all except grants on horse-breeding concession being the most important — gave a temporary reprieve to government. But this was not to last for long. The banking crisis of 1913 caused the first rumblings. The years 1913-20 saw resentment and widespread discontent against the burden of land revenue and water-rates, more so in the face of frequent crop failures in these years as also waterlogging, price-rise, increase in incidence of death and disease. [4]

These were closely followed by the outbreak of the War and its concomitants - the hateful war loans and the recruitment drive. In one district, Lyallpur, - alone, over Rs 66 lakhs were collected on account of war loans and other war-related funds, while over 6,500 men were

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3. Home Pol., Feb. 1909, Pro 2-11, B. W.R.

4. Home Pol., 1917-18, W.R., B Pros.

recruited for the army and 2,000 Biloches drafted as Sarwans.[5] The Central Recruiting Board fixed the Punjab quota of combatants at 190,000 but the Punjab Provincial Conference resolved to exceed this by providing 20,000 non-combatants as well. The loyalists did not lag behind:

"Rs 33 per square were forcibly levied en masse".[6] No square holder was either consulted or spared; the proposal having come from title-hunters. The evidence collected by the Sub-Committee set up by the Indian National Congress to enquire into the 1919 disturbances, collected massive evidence to show forced recruitment, collection of war loans, and instances of high-handedness on the part of lambardārs, zaildārs, tahsildārs, nāib-tahsildārs, patwāris, Honorary Magisterates and Extra Assistant Commissioners. The resentment against these often led to murders of officials on recruitment tours in villages.[7]

The 1919 anti-recruitment agitation shook the very foundations of the government, more so because of its likely impact and implication for the army. The importance

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5. de'Montmorency, D.C., Lyallpur: The History of the War.
6. Punjab Disturbances, British Perspective, op.cit,p.57
7. Ibid., Indian Perspective, vol. I, p. 22

of the Army question in Punjab is by now well-known.[8] Once again government and government institutions as seen in the form of railways, communications, etc. came under attack, often even violent attacks. [9]

The popular response to this 'political instability' was reflected in various ways, including non-payment as well as non-investment in co-operative societies pending clearance of the 'political horizon'. But official response to these developments was typical. On the one hand any link between the discontent building up and government policy was totally denied; on the other, the agitations were attributed to the conspiratorial, seditious designs of nationalists. [10] In the same way in 1919 it was concluded that "there is even less ground for attributing unrest in the province to any action taken by government in connection with the war loan". [11]

The Depression saw a fresh wave of discontent spreading across the Punjab countryside. with peasants demanding large-scale reduction in land revenue and water-rates, if

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8. Josh, 1979, passim.

9. Punjab Disturbances, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 90

10. Punjab Disturbances, 1919-20, Vol. 2, British perspective, Deep Publications, 1976 Ed. p. 90.

11. cf. Home Pol, W.R., for 1918-19, Rev. Agri. Rev. March 1911-A, P. 36, F 17.

not total remissions. In 1931, Punjab government announced a total of remissions worth Rs 108.25 lakhs in land revenue and water-rate combined which worked out to only 5 annas in the rupee for rabi crop and 3 annas in the rupee on water-rates on wheat. [12]

Upto the Depression years, political expression of any sort of discontent amongst the rural population was directed not on religious or community based lines, but specifically against government. In fact even religion-centered agitations had a strong anti-imperialist content. The two major agitations that erupted in the Colony districts were in 1905-1907 around the proposed Colonies' Bill and the anti-recruitment agitation which came to a head in 1919. Apart from these there were a series of localised stirs in districts, by different rural segments, around very specific grievances with concrete demands. These included the horse-breeding grantees agitation in Shahpur, the Nili Bar Colonists' agitation and so on. Clearly through all this political upsurge, the occasion was provided by official measure and the anger of the peasantry was also, consequently, directed against government. Notably, on all these occasions it was found that the peasantry showed a remarkable unity in the course of

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12. Master Hari Singh; 1984, Vol. 2, p. 187

these agitations. Smith, Colonisation Officer, Jhelum Canal, commented on the fact that during the 1905 agitation :

> men of various castes and tribes in the Canal Colony sank their mutual differences and dissensions and united in a common cause . 13

This is not to deny that tensions existed between social groups in the countryside. We have in chapters IV, V and VI outlined some of the processes which lay at the root of tension between social classes. The rapid pace at which peasants were integrated into the market, the remarkable increase in tenancy and decline in the rights and status of poor peasant-tenants, as well as the viciousness of the debt transaction, were all sources of deep social conflict. This in fact provided the base for a radical peasant movement which was building up at this time. [14] While social disparities were not unknown before British rule there is no doubt that Colonisation hastened the pace and scale of differentiation. The social and political changes ushered in by Colonisation also gave rise to various social

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13. Rev. Agri. Rev. April 1909, A, Pro 1-4, Evidence, op. cit., p. 583.

14. cf. Josh, 1979, op.cit.; also Master Hari Singh, 1984, op. cit.

parties which sought to represent the political aspirations of diverse groups and interests. These have not formed part of this study but we refer to them here since they point to tensions and political developments, the roots of which lay in the changes discussed here. These trends and movements, reflect general trends that tie up with some of the issues discussed here.

Needless to say, the Colonial government was not a mere catalyst of change. Rather this very 'change' and development served a role and purpose within the grand imperial design. As social groups began to assert, themselves and their aspirations manifested themselves in political alignments, the British government stepped in to manage and manipulate these to its own advantage. The form of this intervention followed a curious yet familiar pattern. At the risk of sounding banal we will distinguish between the government's ideological and political stance.

Ideologically, the British government sided with the sturdy Sikh peasantry of Central Punjab. The preference for the Sikh Jat, 'agriculturists of the best type', influenced allotment policy in the Colonies in a big measure. This was in sharp contrast with the Janglis who combined in themselves absence of agricultural skill,

general slackness, and economic thriftlessness. These were followed up with other, similar insulting and disdainful observations about Janglis and other communities or castes. While mass political activity pointed to united action around common issues, government's attitude and policy stood out in sharp contrast. Particularly notable was the element of patronage combined with an arrogant tolerance towards certain communities, revealing under cover of paternalism, an inherent streak of the 'white Man's Burden'. Thus, references are replete with the humanising, civilising influence of immigrant settlers on the Janglis, and success in the Jangli ilaqa being attributed to their having imbibed much from their colonist neighbours. [15]

What merits attention at this point is that while political events gave proof of the unity being forged around basic issues, official policy and official writing increasingly highlighted underlying differences between social groups, religions and communities. Special effort was made to keep traditional bonds alive, and to create hostility where none existed. This was combined with a search for local support agents, classes and social groups who could help stem the tide of anti-British sentiment.

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15. Cf. A.R.s, for Lyallpur district in the 1930s, passim.

In this search for political strategies, the Punjab government mastered well the tactic of giving a religious colour to existing or latent social tensions. In the Canal Colonies, the allotment policy and its outcome facilitated this task.

Way back in 1886 Thorburn had drawn official attention to the fact that:

> without some radical changes in the substantive civil law and its mode of administration and for certain tracts in the revenue system, the impatience which now finds expression in the occasional murder, maltreatment or plundering of an obnoxious moneylender or other necessities of life will soon grown into widespread disaffection... 16

In 1912, Financial Commissioner, Fagan, expressed fear that co-operative societies, which were to an extent in competition with Hindus moneylenders, could become anti-Hindu organisations in regions where Muslim debtors joined them in larger numbers. [17]

Allotment policy in the Canal Colonies was, nevertheless, directed at maintaining the differences and identity based on caste or religious differences. The justification for such a policy was found precisely in

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16. Thorburn, 1886, op. cit. p.40

17. PCSR, 1912-13, Note by F.C.

those social disparties to which it had contributed. Thus it was felt that :

> the mingling in the Colonies of tribes drawn from the extreme of the Punjab has accentuated the differences which must arise when the most frugal and acquisitive are brought into juxtaposition with the most reckless and improvident. 18

From this the conclusion was logically drawn that :

> it would be impolitic in the extreme to allow Hindu Jats to become co-sharers in Jangli Villages . 19

Even though the Colonies' Committee found no instance of expression of political hostility along caste or religious lines, it recommended that "for the Colony districts re-grouping of tribes be undertaken," for, "the Muhammedans of the West Punjab, should at least be protected from the Hindu and Sikh Jats of the Central Punjab districts". [20] While the Committee had a point in so far as the Hindu and Sikh Jats, Khatris etc. represented affluent landowning and commercial classes which controlled land, capital and trade in the region — there can be no difference of opinion regarding the protection the smaller

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18. Canal Colonies Committee Report, 1909, op. cit.,p.654
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.

land holders and tenants required. But what is notable is that this situation was a direct result of official policy; that the basis of conflict was an economic one; and lastly, while talking of giving protection to the smaller peasants, government itself was, in fact, doing all within its means to prop up the prosperous Sikh peasantry. Further, the Committee's recommendations were paradoxical in that they came in the wake of its own observation that all through the 1905-7 agitation the rural classes had shown remarkable solidarity.

Notwithstanding the Canal Colonies' Committee recommending steps to protect the less prosperous peasants, the administration's preference for the immigrant Colonists remained a fact; when the allotments for the Lower Bari Doab Canal area were being made, it was apprehended that residents of Multan and Montgomery, who had hitherto led almost pastoral lives, "will make life intolerable to the new settlers, whose immigration they will naturally resent unless some measure is adopted to keep their criminal tendencies in check...." [21] It was also recalled that early settlers in the Chenab and Jhelum Colonies, "suffered a good deal and even now suffer

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21. Rev. Agri. Rev., Nov. 1913, A, Pro. 6, F. 423.

from the depredation of their Jangli neighbours". [22] At such times government chose to forget that in fact extension of canal irrigation and Colonisation had adversely affected the rights and, the way of life itself, of the old inhabitants. Further, amongst the original settlers also, government made distinctions amongst the tribes, and selectively granted them favours or treated them otherwise. Differences within them were later utilized for political purposes.

Government's contribution to reinforcing prejudices and caste and religious tensions were noted by its own officers. Middleton, Census Officer, expressed his resentment in the 1921 Census Report:

> "these castes have been largely manufactured and almost entirely preserved as separate castes by the British Government. Our land records and official documents have added iron bonds to the old rigidity of caste..." 23

Referring to the Census data where even the lower castes, not too rigid on their own, were pigeon-holed under hereditary occupational names if castes could not be found; Middleton believed that left to themselves, many of these castes would rapidly disappear. The 1931

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22. Ibid.

23. Census, Punjab, Report, 1921, op.cit., p. 343

census went further with the Census Officer, pointing out that since the census was being conducted in a period of political upheaval with the people knowing fully well that the future constitution was being moulded there was a rush to swell numbers so as to ensure greater representation. This was a direct response to the tactics the British government had used all this while and 'community leaders' were out to take advantage of this stance now. The Census gave descriptions of how the tug-o-war was fought rather fiercely with menial castes forming the main target. Since these were drawn from all the three major religious groups, leaders of all three were eager to enrol them as followers of their respective religions. [24]

In another comment on the importance of religion as a category in the Census, it was pointed out that :

> questions related to religions expanded steadily and cut across much of the older subjects discussed in the Census reports, so that initial concern for religion and religious groups expanded with time . 25

The Census in fact provided a new conceptualization of religion — as a community, an aggregate of individuals mapped, counted and above all, compared with other

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24. Census, Punjab Report, 1931, p. iii-iv

25. K.W. Jones, 1981; p. 84

religious communities. Once the Census reports and their findings filtered down to literate Indians it ceased to be a neutral instrument which merely described but did not influence, and by 1890s the census itself was drawn into the world it described, becoming "one more arena for conflict and manipulation". [26]

The policy pursued by government bore fruit in the meantime. The latent tensions amongst rural classes influenced and came to be reflected in a miniscule way in the political alignments that emerged at the Provincial level. In the course of these years the Muslim League and the Unionist Party, began their politics of wooing mass support — both pursued the line of appealing on sectarian platforms. Both combined genuine economic demands and grievances, of different social groups they represented, with rhetoric which even when adopting a seemingly secular stance promoted communal hatred. The political aspirations of 'leaders' of various communities and the manouvres of an imperial government, fed on each other, and played on communal passions. Thus these years saw the rise of the Unionist Party's loyalist politics which promoted tension between agriculturists and non-agriculturists, between Jats and other castes, and master-

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26. Ibid.

minded an electoral strategy of caste and religion-based politics which amply suited the colonial state. As opposed to the pre-eminent position of the Congress in most other Provinces, Punjab witnessed the growing strength of groups, associations and parties which strengthened mutually antagonistic groups while giving the British ample scope to play on the aspirations of each to drive a further wedge into the unity that anti-imperialist forces sought to build. [27]

Government played no small role in channelising social discontent into a communal stream of thought. If official reports and documents are to be believed, the economic basis for discontent did not exist at all. For, the official explanation for all social problems lay in the habits and lifestyle of the people affected. Early in the history of Punjab, 'stereotypes' were evolved and these served to explain all official action. Thus debt was increasing due to cultivators 'living extravagantly', and the tendency on the part of zamindars to leave work to other people 'once they made a fortune'. It was always ignorance, thriftlessness, and irrational expenditure on non-productive heads that contributed to debt, in so far as it was an indicator of poverty. Thorburn, himself one of the first to draw attention to this problem, subscribed

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27. Cf. Chowdhury, 1984. New Delhi.

to this opinion.[28] On the other hand, when reports showed that supposedly more industrious and 'better' cultivators were also deeply in debt, Darling's thesis of debt amongst the Punjab peasantry being a result of prosperity proved timely and useful in rebutting any criticism of Punjab's agricultural progress.[29] All through this, official writing on the subject studiously avoided being drawn into a critical evaluation of the impact of its own agrarian policies. The fact that in the projected 'model' of the Canal Colonies, the main scourges of colonial agriculture — tenancy and rent, debt and land transfer — could be well identified by the early part of the twentieth century and that the Colonies in this respect showed no different trends from the rest of the country, were facts consciously and conveniently pushed aside. Instead, astronomical figures for exports, for production and the rising value of agricultural produce were cited to ward off criticism.

Refusal to accept any link between the social-agrarian problems and governmental policy led to and stemmed from a search for solutions which fell in line with the false ideological premises officialdom chose to propagate. Communities, in official propaganda, were attributed traits

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28. Thorburn, 1886, op. cit., p. 85

29. Darling, 1925, op. cit., passim

and assigned roles. Hence the labels — the "martial races", the "thriftless Mohammedens," the "indolent Janglis", the "sturdy Jats", the "shrewd Sikhs" or the "rapacious Hindu moneylender, or kirār".... The list was endless. Along with such typecasting, officials projected models of ideal peasant behaviour with immigrant groups, 'the best Punjabi type', designed to serve as the role-model for diffusion of good agricultural practices as well as positive values such as hardwork, thrift, self-cultivation etc. The Janglis, original inhabitants, and Muslim cultivators, identified with bad agriculture and negative values, represented the other extreme. [30]

The all-pervasive hand of Imperial Policy created conditions where assimilation of the various streams became difficult giving rise to new tensions and offering greater scope for political manouvring to the Colonial State. Such characterisation was mischievous and dangerous. But then imperial governments have always been known to play games which are dangerous. The remarkable thing was that the Colonial government lined up such a magnificant array of Punjab officials — Rose, Ibbetson, Darling, Calvert, Cunningham — who are today known more

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30. Siddiqui, A.J., 1965, Unpub., Microfilm, NMML, p. 168.

for their historical and sociological contribution than their administrative assignments. Clearly these were not merely objective students of social anthropology. Nor was the typecasting of different communities into different values a harmless exercise. Subsequent political events in British Punjab were ample proof of an imperial purpose they served.

GLOSSARY

Ābādi	- Settlement.
Ābādkār	- Peasant Grantee.
Abi	- a class of soil irrigated from streams or springs.
Ābiānā	- water-rate, occupier's rate, levied on irrigated land.
Arhat/Arhtiās	- commission, brokerage; commission agent.
Banjar jadid	- land which has lain waste more than three but less than eight harvests.
Banjar Kādim	- land which has lain waste for eight or more harvests.
Bār	- High land between river valleys; generally unculturable waste before Colonisation.
Barani	- unirrigated land, dependent on rainfall.
Bet	- low-lying land forming the flood plain or a river.
Bunds	- embankments.
Chak	- village; block of land with a separate water-course.
Chāhi	- land irrigated from a well.
Chāhi-nahri	- land irrigated from both canals and wells.
Chhamb	- marsh land.
Chakotā	- a rent fixed in amount; also applied to a rent fixed in terms of grain, or money, or both.
Charāgāh	- grazing land.
Chaukidār; Chaukidārānā	- watchman; watch and ward tax.
Chher	- obligator labour on canals, for clearance etc.
Cho	- a torrent.

Dalāl	- broker.
Darkhwāst	- application, request.
Dhanwāis	- weighmen.
Doābs	- land lying between two rivers.
Dofasli	- two harvests.
Faslānā	- fee paid each harvest.
Gaddās	- carts.
Gaushālā	- sanctuary for cows; charitable contribution levied for the maintenance of old and decrepit cattle.
Ghair-mumkin	- unculturable.
Ghair-tirni-guzār	- to whom the tirni settlement is not applicable.
Hāts	- periodic, village markets.
Haqq	- right, used with reference to the proportion of area a grantee was entitled to irrigate.
Hithār	- riverain tract.
Hithāri	- old settlers of the riverain tract who were cultivators.
Jāgīr	- an assignment of land revenue.
Jhāllar	- lift for irrigation.
Jamā	- land revenue.
Jangli	- indigenous residents of the Colony tracts who led nomadic, semi-nomadic levels.
Kallar	- land impregnated with salt; saline efflorescence.
Kallar-ghair-mumkin	- land impregnated with salt and therefore unculturable.

Kallarāthi	- land affected by kallar.
Kamins	- menials, village servants.
Kankut	- appraisement of produce.
Khādir	- riverain tract.
Kharāba	- cropped area that fails to mature; remission for failed crops.
Karch zamindāri	- deduction made by landlord from tenant's share for expenses incurred during cultivation.
Kharif	- autumn harvest.
Kiārābandi	- division of field in beds to facilitate irrigation.
Killā	- one-twenty-fifth part of an acre ;
Kirāya-teh-zamini	- ground rent, charged for home site in Colony villages.
Lambardār-Lambardāri	- village-headman; cess levied for payment of village headman.
Lekhā-mukhi	- a form of mortgage.
Malbā	- a cess levied on villagers to meet common village expenses.
Mālikānā	- proprietary dues.
Mandi	- town market.
Marlā	- a measure of land, 1/160 of an acre.
Mānjha	- land lying between the Beas and Ravi rivers.
Mauzās	- village or Colony estate.
Mazbis	- applied to low caste converts to Sikhism.
Mogā	- head/outlet of water-course.
Nahri	- irrigated from a canal.

Nahri partā - charge for water.

Nākkā - Outlet from a water-course.

Nālās - natural stream.

Nazrānā - payments due to the state.

Pandi - deduction in market at the time of a sale.

Patti - sub-division of a village, usually under one lambardar.

Rabi - spring harvest.

Rahnās - habitat of indigenous tribes.

Rajbahā - major distributary of a canal.

Rakhs - grazing, forest lands in Western Punjab, later treated as waste lands part of state preserve.

Rais - capitalist grantee on horse-breeding terms.

Rāridār - land receiving drainage water from higher land.

Sailāb - river flood, land subject to river floods or irrigated by it.

Sarsaripartā - revenue assessment based on an average, non-classified land survey.

Sarwans - attendants for camels.

Satta - used for speculation in the commercial sphere.

Shāmilāt - village common land.

Sufedposh - yeoman grantee on horse-breeding terms.

Tātuls - time of each water-turn during canal irrigation.

Tirni, tirni-guzār - grazing tax; to whom tirni was applicable

Tulāi	- deduction at the time of a sale for weighing.
Wāri	- turn of water for irrigation.
Wāribandi	- fixing of turn for water for irrigation.
Zabti	- cash rents for crops not easily divisible.
Zail, zaildar	- a group of villages; local influential man in charge of a zail.
Zillādar	- irrigation department official in charge of revenue - for collection of water-dues.

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