

## **Revenue Functionaries in Kashmir During The Dogra Period (1846-1947)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this paper researcher try to highlight the Revenue Administration in the Kashmir valley during the Dogra Period. What was the state policy towards agriculture and what are the different taxes imposed upon the peasantry by the state? Kashmir was divided into various parganas and wazarats from time to time and Gulab Singh did not introduce any change in the revenue administration. Administration run by different officials at various levels and we will discuss their role in the paper.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Parganas, wazarat, jagirdars, kardars, chaldars and Muafidars*

### **INTRODUCTION**

For revenue administration Kashmir was divided into various *parganas* and *wazarats* from time to time and Maharaja Gulab Singh did not introduce any change in this system of revenue administration in the beginning, but allowed the valley to remain divided into different *parganas*, 36 in number.<sup>1</sup> After some time, when he roughly estimated the fiscal condition of the valley, he divided it into three divisions and entrusted the administration of these three divisions to Wazirs- Ratnu, Narayan bhan, Kanhaya Singh and Pandit Raj Kak Dhar. But they not only neglected to undertake the steps to improve agricultural production and there by ameliorate the condition of the peasantry but equally ignored the increasing corruption in State's revenue department.<sup>2</sup> To quote Maharaja Gulab Singh, "owing to the activities of wazir Ratnu the administration of the valley became defective and the revenue was not collected satisfactorily with the result the entire administration was in a shambles."<sup>3</sup> In 1852 the valley was divided into seven main divisions and administration was entrusted to the following persons:

1. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar.
2. Wazir Punoo.
3. Wazir Zorawroo.

4. Mian Amir Singh
5. Munshi Trilok Chand
6. Colonel Beji Singh
7. Janki Dass.

These above officials were appointed as *jagirdars* of the valley. They were responsible for the collection of revenue. And these *jagirdars* appointed *kardars* for the revenue collection. But the whole system of revenue became more complicated and workable in the interest of the corrupt revenue officials. During this period there is a scattered references in the records that Gualb Singh appointed adequate revenue staff and established the department of *Dol-i-jinsi* (office of the grain). However, nothing appears to have been done which can be termed as definite.<sup>4</sup>

The whole valley was divided into different *wazarats* of *sher-i-khas*, *Kamraj*, *Anantnag*, *Shupian* and *Pattan*. But in 1880 the number of the *wazarats* was reduced to four by merging the *wazarat* of *Shupian* together with *Anantnag wazarat*.<sup>5</sup> *Wazarats* were under the control of *wazir wazarat*. Each *wazarat* was further divided into *tehsils* which were kept under the supervision and control of *tehsildars*.<sup>6</sup>

The head of the revenue department was *Hakim-i-Ala* or the Governor of the province and the executive control of the revenue department rested with *Diwan-i-Jins* or the Revenue commissioner.<sup>7</sup> The latter's duties included transportation of grain to the public store houses, its distribution at fixed rates and the maintenance of its account with the help of subordinate staff.<sup>8</sup> After them there were *wazirs* of the *wazarats*. The main duty of the *wazirs* was the realization of revenue. According to Charles Girdlestone, "*wazir* is the deputy commissioner of British territory, his charge being small his authority more restricted and duties less multifarious."<sup>9</sup>

**Tehsildar:** Final assessment about the crops was done by the *tehsildar* and it was up to him to take final decision regarding the total produce of the village crop. Under *tehsildar*, a number of officials worked like *Naib-i- Tehsildar, Thanedar, Kardar, Sazowal, Patwari, Muqadam, Shiqdar, Lambardar, Harkar and Tarazudar*.<sup>10</sup>

**Naib-i-Tehsildar:** He was the incharge of *Nayabat* (group of vilages), and performed his revenue and administrative functions. He was assisted by *Sadr-i-Daftri* and *Khazanachi* for maintaining the revenue records at *Nayabat* level<sup>11</sup>.

**Thanedar:** He performed functions of both the revenue as well as the judicial authority in his jurisdiction and he was the chief official of the pargana. His main function was to look after the condition of the people and report to tehsildar from time to time. He settled all disputes between the peasants. Under his control were 40 to 50 sepoys, called *Nizamati-paltan*, who assisted the revenue officials at the time of assessment and collection. In case of fraud and deceit he had power to give minor punishments.<sup>12</sup>

**Kardar:** During the Dogra period *kardar* held a very important position and he had an authority in the assessment and collection of the revenue. He surveyed the crops before final assessment. He was assisted by two officials namely *parchanavis* (the record writer) and *tarazudar*<sup>13</sup>. He extracted *salamana* from the peasants individually on festive occasions like *Desara and Nauroz*. In 1860 these were replaced by *chakladars*<sup>14</sup>

**Sazawul:** He was the incharge of ten villages and he supervised the work of *shiqdar* and reported to the *kardar*.

**Patwari:** In every village there was a *patwari* or the village accountant and his main duty was to keep a separate register for the entries of all *Jagirdars* and tenants under them were being entered.<sup>15</sup>

**Muqaddam:** He was the village headman and used to provide assistance to revenue officials during the period of collection.

**Shiqdar:** His main function was to watch the growth of the crops. The *shiqdar* received eight *karwars* of *shali* from the state and took his prerequisite about twelve *kharwars* from the village.

**Lambardar:** His function was to collect revenue and was accountable to *tehsildar* for the revenues of villages which he collected. Usually he retained 2 percent of the revenue from the collected sum as reward for his labour. E. F. Knight says “it is he who too often receives the pay of these (coolies working under him) and how much he retains as his *Dastur* and how much he hands over to them below the villages scape goat and a powerful *lambardar* would never render the state its due.”<sup>16</sup> During the period of our study the revenue assignees and grantees of Kashmir were *Jagirdars, Muafiadars and Chakdars*.

**Jagirdars:** Every *jagirdar* was assigned a fixed number of villages wholly or partially as a

jagir.<sup>17</sup> These *jagirdars* were hereditary in nature and when a *jagirdar* died heirless, his jagir instead of escheating to the state devolved on the other *jagirdars*<sup>18</sup>. The cultivators had to pay land revenue to the *jagirdars* instead of paying it to the state. The *jagirdar* enjoyed unlimited power of collecting revenue in his *jagir*. When Gulab Singh became the ruler of the state he found that a large number of the *jagirs* in the state were registered.<sup>19</sup> In order to have effective control over the civil and military administration of the state Maharaja Gulab Singh confiscated some of the *jagirs*. This naturally created resentment among the dispossessed landlords against Gulab Singh. Finally Maharaja Gulab Singh came to the conclusions after negotiating with the British authorities at Lahore that the confiscated *Jagirs* and *Muafis* should all be released to restore peace in Kashmir. During Maharaja Pratap Singh's rule a committee was appointed to investigate into the matters of *Jagirs* and *Muafis*. This committee introduced a new class of landholders known as *pattadars*. The persons who enjoyed the jagirs of Rupee 3000 or above per annum were called *jagirdars* and those who enjoyed the *jagirs* of below rupees 3000 per annum were called *pattadars*. These *pattadars* were merely the assignees of land revenue and enjoyed no proprietary rights.

**Muafidars:** Besides Jagir grants which were connected with the military or non military services, there were the *Mauafi* grants which involved the remission of revenue. The practice of granting large tracts of land, both irrigated and non-irrigated, as revenue free continued from ancient times down to the Dogra period.<sup>20</sup> However, during Dogra period *muafis* were of two kinds: the religious and non-religious. In religious *maufi*, the *maufidars* received 1/3 of the amount of land revenue assigned in cash and 2/3 in kind. The non-religious *maufis* were granted to the persons for construction work of public use like bridges, wells etc.<sup>21</sup>

**Chakdars:** There was a great deal of waste land in the state. In 1862-63, during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh the state felt the need to get more and more land under cultivation and decided to grant pieces of land called *chaks* out of the waste land.<sup>22</sup> On the whole the state had owned about 12192 acres of land which was granted as *chaks* to influential persons and state government servants (who came to be known as *chakdars*). They were entitled to hold possessions of *chak* and take away its agricultural produce so long as they paid state dues on land in due time.<sup>23</sup> These *chakdars* were liable for payment through *lambardar* of all state dues, according to the instalments fixed for the payment of land revenue in tracts in which the *chak*

was situated. If at all any *chakdar* failed to pay the instalment by due date, he was liable to be treated as defaulter under the law. In case of *chakdars* who cultivated no part of land with their own hands the state demand was subject to reduction of 12 ½ per cent of revenue but not of the cesses assessed there on.<sup>24</sup> The other obligations imposed upon these *chakdars* after the land settlement of 1889 were that they were asked to use due diligence in bringing the land under cultivation not less than 80 per cent of the total area granted within a period of 10 years from the date on which he received possession. The land allotted to a *chakdar* could in no condition be leased out for grazing of grass instead of bringing it under cultivation. He was entitled to transfer his right as such by sale, mortgage, gift or otherwise. He was also permitted on application to the *wazir wazarat* to have the name of any person closely related to him added on as co-sharer with himself, provided that the person was subject of the state.<sup>25</sup>

These *Chaks* were of different kinds but the obligations or terms and conditions laid down were the same for all. From 1879 another class of landlords was created by granting *Mukarraree chaks* and *ishtihari chaks*. The terms and conditions for all these *chaks* were the same but the assessment for *ishtihari chaks* was usually lighter than those of *Mukarraree schaks*. But the holders of all these *chaks* never observed the rules and regulations, they treated the orders of durbar as mere formalities and exploited the peasant through rack renting and arbitrary and often forcible ejection. They appropriated the major portion of the produce and hardly spent any money to improve the lands. To quote Lawrence: “this was a common incident in Kashmir villages. A pandit obtained a grant of waste land in village but neglected to cultivate it. The state then insisted on village to pay the assessment fixed on by government. The *chakdar* did not cultivate it, the village was called upon to do so<sup>27</sup>.”

When Gulab Singh took over Kashmir in 1846, it was believed that he would improve the economic condition of the people by re-organizing the taxation system and revenue policy. He followed the Sikh procedure along with its corrupt practices. In the valley the land tenure was that of “Ryotwari in Runis,” the peasants were holding the land as *Haq-i-Assami* or tenants at will. Gulab Singh himself was a great landlord as he had purchased Kashmir along with its people and in law he was the sole proprietor of all land in his new purchase. The peasants enjoyed the occupancy rights only so long as they paid the government dues and in the event of their failure to do so, they could be ejected.<sup>28</sup> The peasant was allowed to call nothing as his own neither

land and crops nor his own labour, he had not all those rights belonging to peasantry in any other country.<sup>29</sup> Thus the peasant in Kashmir was no better than an agricultural machine in possession he neither had proprietary rights nor occupancy rights.<sup>30</sup> The village aristocracy comprised the hindu landowners, while the muslim peasants were the “toiling sons of the soil”.<sup>31</sup> These muslim peasants had to pay such taxes that the economic crisis bordering on starvation became more or less a regular affair. Most of the peasants were landless labourers working as serfs of the absentee landlords.

Under Maharaja Gulab Singh the demand of the government remained the same as  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the produce plus extra cesses. Although some relaxation was made with regard to the waste and newly cultivated lands government share was reduced to  $\frac{1}{3}$  or sometimes to  $\frac{1}{4}$  share case of newly cultivated lands. The government share was collected mostly in kind at the end of both the harvests (*kharif and rabi crops*). Maharaja Gulab Singh appointed Punjabi staff in the revenue department and it resulted in the resentment of the peasants without any effect on the Maharaja who met with a stern hand, the resistance of cultivators in order to save the state from the loss of revenue.<sup>32</sup> Maharaja Gulab Singh also said to have ordered *wazir punnu* to collect the land revenue on daily basis and money thus collected amounted to 10 to 12 thousand rupees. In 1851 Gulab Singh advised his son Mian Ranbir Singh to give better treatment to the peasants and to leave them with a reasonable portion of land produce.<sup>33</sup> Even then it was settled in the tehsil Handwara that a cultivator would get  $9\frac{1}{2}$  traks out of two *kharwars* and the government share was fixed at one *karwar* and five *traks* and the remaining one *trakh* as the expenses of the secretarial staff (officials concerned with the revenue work). This showed that government received more than half of the produce. As a result of such a high demand the cultivation was neglected and the peasants left their villages and abandoned the cultivation of lands. In order to get more and more land revenue Maharaja Gulab Singh made it compulsory for the cultivators and even shawl weavers to plough the neighbouring barren, stony and hill side areas and those who disobeyed were treated badly.<sup>34</sup> As a result the agriculturists left their villages due to the scarcity of food.

As stated earlier also, in 1852 A.D, the valley of Kashmir was divided into seven divisions. For the purpose of revenue administration and for inducing the peasants to cultivate the land from morning to evening, a specified number of sepoy were kept in each of these divisions who

ensured that the cultivator remained busy<sup>35</sup>. In 1854 A.D, these contractors of revenue were asked by the Maharaja to enhance the revenue demand, similarly the *kardars* of different *parganas* were also advised to collect the extra *trakhs*. These officers thus made extortionate demands on the peasants and presented the proceeds there from to the Maharaja which gave the latter a great pleasure. No doubt, Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857 to 1885) tried to introduce some reforms in the revenue administration, but to no use because the officials never cooperated in carrying out successfully the reforms but persisted in the maintenance of ancient abuses.<sup>36</sup> In 1859 the land was farmed out to the persons known as *kardars* who arranged the cultivation of the estates. The Maharaja distributed the land to the cultivators on the basis of *Nafre* (individual) system<sup>37</sup>. It was the duty of the *kardars* to collect the revenue from the cultivators. It was under this system that revenue was collected from the peasants with the help of *Nizamat-i- Paltan*. In 1865 the extra *traks* per *kharwar* were reduced for all *pandiths* and *pirzadas* to one trak.<sup>38</sup>In 1869 A.D the contract was directly entered into with *Mukadams* or with the zamindars and only two extra *traks* came to be levied instead of four. Another system came into force namely *chaklabandi* under which agricultural lands were divided into *chaklas* (three to four villages forming one chakla) and was allotted on revenue contracts for three years. These *chakladars* robbed the peasant as well as the state. In 1873-74 the village contracts were divided into “*assamiwar khewats*” for three years<sup>39</sup>. The revenue demand was paid either in cash or kind. The harvest of 1875 was a bad one and the state took two shares leaving only one with the cultivators and added two more *traks* per *kharwar* to the assessment besides an aggregate tax amounting to Rs 9/2/- percent. When in 1877 the scarcity began the contracts broke down and in 1880 a new *Assamiwar Khewat* was made which was based on the cash or kind collections from the previous years known as cash settlement, though it was only in name a cash settlement and it depended on the higher authorities to decide yearly how much to take in kind and how much in cash.<sup>40</sup> The system worked in a manner that an order was issued annually from Srinagar for the collection of a certain quantity of shali, and the demand was fixed at 20 to 30 percent in excess of what there was the likelihood of getting. Each Tehsildar was then informed of the amount named from the headquarters with an addition in *kharwar*. As soon as the villagers learnt that they had to pay its *khewat* in large proportion of “*shali*,” the bribery began which resulted in crushing the poor villagers and enriching the well –to- do. The in charge official would enforce the settlement on the peasants by cheating them and would be proud of results of the

assessment which he laid in paper before the higher authorities. The assessment was based on the famine years of 1877-79 and the actual collection of the previous years were below the average because of the famine. It was oppressive in those villages which were not left by the people during the famine and was easy on those villages which were left by the people and re-inhabited by those who came back.

In 1882 a new experiment of revenue “*izadboli*” (Auctioning villages) was brought into force. Under this system the villages were auctioned to the highest bidder among the pandit contractors. These bidders would bid for the villages without taking into consideration the capacity of the villages to pay the amount of the bidder. Even during the bad harvests the bidders would wring all they could out of the villagers and did not paid a single rupee to the state. Even the sums offered at the time of auction could never be taken out of wretched villagers as both the cultivator and the official concerned became the *bakidars* (defaulters) of revenue to the state. The *bakidar* or defaulter list comprised nearly everyone in the state from the prime minister downwards.<sup>41</sup>

The *bakidars* existed before 1851 A.D. when Maharaja Gulab Singh ordered the remission of a certain portion of revenue arrears on the impoverished cultivators, even then the *bakidars* of revenue were severely punished with the grinding of corn, picking out of the beard hair by hair, arresting the relatives and even their women folk.<sup>42</sup> The *bakidars* were chained , exiled and even killed in the prison. Sometimes owing to the severities imposed on these people they were compelled to commit suicide.<sup>43</sup>

The balances against the *bakidars* were either paper arrears or were mostly irrecoverable. The officials ruined the villages under the *Giriftari* (to collect arrears) and the tehsildar yearly decided how much should be collected on account of arrears. The *izadboli* was abused by the system *tukmmusoda* (seed grain in advance) and it was the custom to allot to each village a certain amount of grain for seed but it was merely an “instrument of peculation”. The grain never reached the cultivator but was distributed among the villages headman, patwari and other officials. The value of the grain was listed as an arrear against the villages. The system was further abused by regulating the system of enlisting the villages in *sakim-ul-hal* (in firm conditions) i.e in any tehsil some villages were considered to be poor and unable to pay the revenue but in actual practice these had enough resources. Another aspect aggravated by the system of “*izadboli*” was *Mujawaza* (procurement) the system of annually setting the demand

by the government in kind and in cash which became a source of enormous profit to the officials and of great loss to the state and of misery and demoralization of the peasantry.<sup>44</sup>

Thus there was an absence of any settled land revenue system one system followed the other, each being more faulty than the previous one. The mode of collection was haphazard. The crops were usually divided upon the ground in such a manner that both the ruler and the ruled were at the risk of loss. As a common practice the circles of villages were let out to the contractors who were assisted by a chain of officials.<sup>45</sup> When the crops were ready there used to be a dispute as to whether the crops were such that the contractor could fulfill his engagements. So an official appraiser was appointed whose valuation depended on the extent of the bribes paid to him by the peasants. Then crops were cut and threshed were stacked within an enclosure surrounded by a low hedge of thorny bushes were they remained for months in heaps. The peasant took his share and the grains reserved for the state were carried on ponies or in boats to the public granaries where these were sold at low prices by the officers.<sup>46</sup> When the crops were ready the government pit its own watch *shaqdars* to keep the peasant away from his crops and subjected him to severe penalties if he dared use little crop for his use<sup>47</sup> or even if an animal ate a little of the stacked grains, the owner of that animal was punished severely. If the villagers could not satisfy the government demands they were deprived of their cattle and sheep by the tyrant officials as was seen in 1880. These officials used to plunder the peasants and embezzle the revenue due to the state.<sup>48</sup> The revenue system was such that whether the peasant works much or little he is left with barely enough to get along on till next harvest<sup>49</sup>. Thus the peasant was a machine to produce for the huge population of the city, which resulted in peasants fleeing from their villages leaving his share to be paid by his neighbours who had more land than they could cultivate and thus were the worst sufferers for they had to pay the revenue.

## **Exactions:**

The valley had been subjected to exactions since the time of foreign aggressions. The Mughal and Afghan Governors extracted as much money from the Kashmir as they could. The Sikh rule was no better; Ranjit Singh's most concern was with money, no matter, how it was collected.<sup>50</sup> The people of every profession even the tailors and barbers were severely taxed. The system of exactions and taxation of the pre-Dogra period was not only maintained but also broadened in

many ways during the period under study. Maharaja Gulab Singh had a vast field to make the exactions from because he seemed to consider his purchase of Kashmir as a financial investment, so he was determined to wring rich profits from it. He had an immense greed for money. It is no wonder, when the central authority looked only for money, the governors were the robbers who lived on the labour of the people. The officers were allowed without any restraint to collect the normal tax plus extortionate amounts by fleecing the people.<sup>51</sup>

Maharaja Gulab Singh indeed inaugurated a rapacious economic programme and everything was taxed heavily every product and every person. In the first instance he confiscated the *Muafi* lands (tax free) of Hindu and Muslims priests which enabled the government to collect additional two hundred thousand *kharwars* of grain per year.<sup>52</sup> The government made each product a monopoly and then farmed out that monopoly to a contractor. Rice was practically in the hands of the government, silk, saffron, tea, salt, koth, paper, tobacco, the lacquered works such as pen cases, toilet boxes and various kinds of forest products, hemp, water-nuts all these formed the government monopoly.<sup>53</sup> The peasant had to pay two kinds of revenues the legitimate one known as *koul* and the illegal known as *Rasum*. *Rasum* was the prerequisite enjoyed by the officials who kept a list of the items falling under the head. Everything was taxed except “air and water” which was in abundance in the valley and could not be brought under taxation<sup>54</sup> the Maharaja doubled the price of *shali* (unhusked rice) from one to two rupees per *kharwar*, which resulted in hoarding and black marketing and the common scarcity of food. The cultivators had to pay for every hundred *kharwars* of *shali* permit tax for importing it to Srinagar.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the land revenue the peasant had to pay *Treki* which was advanced by degree till it reached three – eighths of the tenants share. The annual tax on singharas (water –chestnuts) was raised from fourteen thousand to a hundred thousand rupees and thus these assessments along with the land taxes raised the government annual revenue from about 35 lakhs to over 46 lakhs of rupees.<sup>56</sup> Thus the peasants had to live by the grace of god because their condition was completely deteriorating. Each house in the village had to pay four to twenty *annas* as a cess. The right to legalise the marriages was farmed out and even the dead could never be buried except by the licensed and privileged grave-diggers. The duties were also levied on the dried cow dung that was used as fuel. The social evils like gambling and prostitutions were not only encouraged but also fastened as it yielded a large amount to the government. The social ceremonies were also taxed.<sup>57</sup> *Rasum-i-khidmatgaran* was a levy collected for the maintenance

of the palace attendants at the rate of four *annas* on one hundred rupees and four *traks* for a hundred *Traks* (kind).<sup>58</sup> *Doll jinsi* was the tax imposed on the peasants as maintenance of sepoy regiments and collected as four additional *traks* on every hundred *kharwars*. *Rusum-i-Deorhi*, was collected from thanadars, peasants and other officials of the *parghanas* at the rate of two to three hundred rupees. The government collected the oil forcibly from the people for the purpose of burning lamps in the palace, government offices and in the main streets.<sup>59</sup> It was in 1848 A.D that kitchen gardens were brought under taxation when sultan (sala) *pahalwan* (the muqadam of vegetable growers) offered to pay the government annually one thousand two hundred rupees more than the previous years demand if he was allowed to collect a levy from the vegetable gardens and he collected it at the rate of 4 *annas* from each kitchen garden known as *Rasum-i-Sabzi*.<sup>60</sup> The barbarians who were exempted from the taxes traditionally were now asked to pay the *baj* and *khiraj* (Rasums). Many private gardens growing apples, pears and walnuts were confiscated because these fruits had a great demand in Punjab. The fruits were taxed at the rate of  $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the annual produce by the government. The animals of the village were equally taxed<sup>61</sup> every keeper of milk cow had to supply one seer of Ghee yearly as tax or in cash and was collected from 10 to 20 rupees. <sup>62</sup>. Maharaja Ranbir Singh was no exception to this system. Girdlestone has pointed out in 1871 A.D. circumcision was taxed which brought in six hundred rupees (Rs 600) as revenue, sale of chinar leaves brought rupees 25 and the tax on sheep and goat earned Rs 1,07,311. Even the village scavenger had to give a specified number of skins to the government annually, whether or not any animal died in the village. The peasants sold their oxen and left the villages due to such harsh atrocities and over exactions. Thus nothing escaped the “*Argus*” eyes of the government and its officials.

## **Conclusion:**

In short, we can say that the revenue officers collected revenue very harshly and exploited the peasantry to unbearable extent. At every stage peasant had to pay enormous taxes which burdened the peasant. Actually the Treaty of Amritsar was responsible for this much exactions from the peasants. Because in this treaty Maharaja Gulab Singh purchased Kashmir from Britishers and he always considered Kashmir as a purchased property.

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- 3 *Ibid.*, Vol.1, f.26
- 4 The other departments established by Maharaja Gulab singh were those of *Daftar-i-Diwani* (the audit accounts department) and the *Daftar-i-nizamat* (the land record office). S. N. Koul, *Kashmir Economics*, p.228
- 5 M.D. Fauq, *Rahnumai Kashmir*, pp.72-73.
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- 17 Beg, Mirza Afzal, *On the Way to Golden Harvest, Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*, published by Land Reforms Officer, jammu and Kashmir government, printed at Ranbir Government Press, Jammu,p.7.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p.10
- 19 Bamzai, P. N.K, *Cultural and Political History of Kashmir*, vol, 3, pp.703-708.
- 20 The term *Muafi* implies exemption from land revenue. This institution of maufi grants is also of an ancient standing in Kashmir. We have evidence to show that ancient rulers of Kashmir endowed revenue free land grants (*Agraharas*) to the charitable or religious institutions or personages. *Agraharas* used by kalhana meant a piece of land, the revenue of which was assigned to an individual or an institution for maintenance of sacred shrines. Kalhans *Rajatarangini*, Eng. Tr .vol 1, 87-100, 121-175, 307, 340, 341 and 355.
- 21 Raina, R. C, *Land Reforms Kashmir*, Vol 2, No. 25 to 26, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec.1952.
- 22 Wingate, A, *op. cit*, pp 60-62

23 Rules regarding grant of waste land for cultivation as sanctioned by his highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur Jammu, 1917, *State Archives, Jammu*.

24 This indeed was the usual case. No *chakdar* cultivated the land with his own hands because mostly they lived in cities and used to visit *chak* generally at the time of harvest. As a result they came to be known as absentee landlords. See a review of the working of land reforms with special reference to big landed estates abolition act in Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu, 1952. Rules regarding grant of waste land for cultivation as sanctioned by his highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur, Jammu, 1917, Jammu archives.

25 26. *Mukarrarees* were a class of land holders, who were in receipt of fixed cash grants from the state either as a reward for their services to the state or as a charity. Beg, M.M.A. *Land Reforms in Jammu and Kashmir, Main stream*, New Delhi, 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Number 1976, pp. 27-29.

27. In fact after the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century these *Chakdars* who were mostly urban Hindu families, became an important force to reckon with. See report by W.R. Lawrence, position of cultivating classes in Kashmir, N.A.I., Foreign Department, Secret, Feb. 1890.

28 James, Collet, *A Trip to Kashmir*, pp.21-22, Neve, E.F, *Beyond The Pir Panchal*, p.57

29 Wingate, *op. cit.*, p.19.

30 Report of the Galancy Commission, 1932, p.27

31. Bazaz, P.N. *Kashmir in Crucible*, p.9, see also Afzal Beg *on way to Golden Harvest*, p.5

32 Saif-ud-din, *Roznamcha*, vol 2, dated 12, 1849, f.69. It is clear from the appointment of Devi Datt in revenue administration.

33 *Ibid*, vol,4, Dated Oct.31st 1851, f.113

34 *Ibid*, dated February 1, 1849, f. 26, it has been recorded in the *Roznamcha* that Maharaja Gulab Singh visited the area lying between Shalimar garden and Nishat garden which was full of hedges and stones. The area was entrusted to the neighbouring cultivators for tillage. However these people jointly presented themselves before the maharaja for justice. But in return sepoy were sent to enter a couple of villages and snatched away all their belongings in cash and kind and to sell their children to make up the government revenues

<sup>35</sup> Saif-u-din, *Roznamcha*, Dated feb.16-18, 1852, Vol. 5, ff. 21-22, Dated August 8, 1852, f.68.

<sup>36</sup> *Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladakh*, p.105. The author writes that from time there have been pretences of diminishing the share of the state, and even of setting the revenue on the basis of payments in cash but the interests of the army of officials are so bound up with the main tenancy of ancient abuses, that improvements are unmade almost as soon as made the promises of future concessions are received by the peasants with a smile of incredulity.

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence, *valley of Kashmir*, p, 402. *Nafre* was a unit which consisted of a man, his wife and one adult son. under the *Nafre* title was given four acres of irrigated land. The *min-nafre* consisted of man and his wife and *pao-nafre* consisted of a bachelor and the land was distributed according to the system as four acres of irrigated land, two acres and one and half acre respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Wingate, *op .cit.* p.19.

<sup>39</sup> *Assami* means cultivator and *khewat* the account so it refers to the cultivator's account. Lawrence, *Valley of Kashmir*, p.403, the author calls the system as the *Raiyatwari* settlement because the state entered into contract with the peasants.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, p, 403.

<sup>41</sup> *Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladakh*, p. 109.

<sup>42</sup> It was ordered in 1853 A.D that hindu *bakidars* should be punished by arresting their women and children till they liquidated debts to the state. Saif-ud-din, *Roznaamcha*, vol. vi, Dated 21 January 1853, f.9.

<sup>43</sup> Saif-ud-din *Roznamcha*, vol. XI Dated March 8, 1858, f. 39. One bakidar, Pandit Lal Chand committes suicide by drowing himself.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence, *Valley of Kashmir*, p. 407. Young husband *Kashmir*, p.177, the author writes that the new

assessment of the land revenue was three times heavy as that of the amount demanded in British districts of Panjab.

<sup>45</sup> *Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladak*, p.110. These officials were the Tarazudar, the Shakdar, the

Sazawal, the Patwari, the Mukadam, the Kardar and Tehsildar.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.11, see also Irland John, B, *From Wall Street to Cashmere*, pp.336 to 398, Saraf, M.Y., *Kashmiris Fight For Freedom*, p. 240. The author writes about the system of collection of the crops that after the grain is harvested it must be sacked and remain until the government assessors report and the king choose to fix the rate of the tax. Sometimes it is two or three months. In the meanwhile the poor wretches, if they have none of the old crop left are obliged to subsist on turnips and herbs.

<sup>47</sup> Beg, Afzal, *On The Way To Golden Harvest*, pp. 28-29. The author writes that “there are cases when even the peasant after having visited his crop had his mouth searched lest he had a few grains hidden in the mouth. If it could be proved that he had even swallowed a few grains then no means of punishment were spared to humiliate him.”

<sup>48</sup> Knight, E.F, *where Three Empires Meet*, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p.74

<sup>50</sup> Hugel, Baron C. *Kashmir and the Punjab*, pp. 404-405.

<sup>51</sup> Saif-u-din, *Roznamcha*, vol.vii, f.230, Dated 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1854.

<sup>52</sup> Mirjanpuri, *Tarikh-i-kashmir*,p.331

<sup>53</sup> Cunningham, Captain, A, cit. Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, p.249-50.Cunningham sent a memo to the resident about the conditions of Kashmir and writes that “the saffron was cultivated by the Maharaja himself and I found the saffron fields of Pampur carefully watched by *chupraris* from the government *thanahs*. It is even said, but I confess that I cannot credit it, that the soliders have once been employed to pick the saffron crops.

<sup>54</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 417. See also Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight For Freedom*, p.257. The paper in its issue of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov.1866, has written that who that has visited the beautiful vale of cashmere has not heard of the extortionate exactions, the grinding tyranny and oppression of the enormous revenues under the name of customs and other dues literally screwed out of the inhabitants of the valley by the Maharaja’s myrmidons.”

<sup>55</sup> Saif-ud-din, *Roznamacha*, vol, ii, Dated Feb.1849, f. 44.

<sup>56</sup> It also included the devaluation of the rupee by 25 percent, Khaniyari, *Wajiz-Ut-Tawarikh*, f.59.

<sup>57</sup> Saif-ud-din, *Roznamcha*, vol.ii, dated Dec.1, 1848, f.6. Under this head every Kashmiri, hindu and muslim,had to contribute at the rate of one rupee according to their social position, on marriage and other festivals and was called BHAT FUND, for the improvement of the social conditions of the bhat community belonging to jammu.

<sup>58</sup> Saif-ud-din, *Roznamacha*, vol.iii, Dated March, 1850, f 37.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.f.6. It has been recorded that every oil dealer had to keep a kettle of specified measure which was to be filled with oil collected from every customer at the rate of ½ seer in the sale of paji (six seers). Each paji cost Rs 1-8-0 in new Srinagar rupees on 1-4-0 annas in old Hari singhi rupee). When Gulab Singh took charge of Kashmir in Nov.1846, two types of silver coins were in circulation. That is *Nanakshahi* rupees which were to be minted at Lahore and *Harisinghi* rupees were to mint at Srinagar from the times of Hari Singh Nalwa, the Sikh governor of Kashmir. However Gulab Singh introduced new silver coins which were called “*Srinagari*” rupees. They were inferior in quality to *Harisinghi* rupees.

<sup>60</sup> Saif-ud-Din *Roznamcha*, vol ii, Dated Dec. 1848, f .7.vol.iii, Dated August 22, sep.1, 1850, ff.98,108.

<sup>61</sup> The contractors of shunga, kotwal, were harsh on the peasant who entered the private stables and took any animal they laid their hands on as a government tax. Saif-ud-Din *Roznamcha*, vol.1, Dated oct.23, 1849, f.3, vol.iii, Dated Jan 2, 1861, f. 2. It has been recorded that the peasants had to feed and keep certain state owned stack of sheep for winter and to return the lot plus one yar of *putoo* per sheep in the next spring and had to contribute one sheep on each batch of one hundred kept by them in addition to sheep tax.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, vol. ii, Dated feb.1849, f. 43. Every person who was the owner of ten horses had to give one to the government as a tax and these were then put in *Mistri-Khana*