

Colonial Administrative Control, Collaboration and Underdevelopment in Colonial Punjab

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the British system of political and administrative control, based on collaboration and its fallout on rural agricultural society of South-West Punjab. Using archival documents, the article brings forward an elaborate plan of colonial administrative policy under which Punjab was sliced from North West Frontier and Mianwali's incorporation in the Punjab despite being part of Bannu district of North West Frontier with a predominantly Pathan population. The focus is on how with the support of local elite as colonial intermediaries created a social structure which led to the growth of parasitic class that became instrumental for the extraction and exploitation at the cost of rural poor. These collaborating elite assisted the British in maintaining stability and peace, helped in recruitment in army with pro-British political orientations. British considered it crucial to sustain indigenous institutions and tribal structure, manipulated and controlled by colonial hierarchy to work for colonial interests. The nexus of state and colonial elite precluded all prospects of development.

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Introduction

The British government was firmly ensconced within a few years after annexation over India as the most formidable power in the subcontinent. After annexation of the Punjab, it was imperative to preserve the tranquility of the Punjab and to control the warrior tendencies of the unruly, rogue tribes of the Punjab.¹ The period of imperialist rule in the Punjab can be analyzed in three most significant contexts, the political entrenchment, revenue extraction and military requirements during the 20th Century. Ruling elites were incorporated into Imperial system as intermediaries between the State and the people. This partnership was consolidated with the Punjabi's contribution of manpower and logistic support for Britain's conflicts on the northwest frontier and in the so-called Indian Mutiny of 1857-58. In this context, military became an important source of livelihood for Punjabis. Mianwali was one such district, identified by colonial state as essentially a recruiting area for colonial army owing to its predominant Pathan population. This article aims to demonstrate that colonial state embraced a policy of selective modernization in the Punjab, premised on the ideology that investment must yield economic benefit. Unlike the rest of the canal colony districts of the Punjab like Shahpur, Sargodha, Montgomery etc where colonial economic policies transformed the society through mega agrarian projects. Mianwali was least touched by any sort of agricultural development. Being a peripheral district of north-west Punjab, it supposedly had no tangible bearing on the politics and economy of the larger Punjab. Hence colonial modernity was not diffused to this part of the Punjab. The system of local political control based on landed elites' mediation helped the state to extract the local resources and manpower which exacerbated the poverty and essential rural character of the district. The article also explores the demarcation of boundaries and incorporation of

1 Ian Talbot, *Punjab and Raj 1849-1947* (Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1988), 34. Also see, Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 24.

the district into Punjab despite having large Pathan population, was inspired by colonial state's forward policy, compatible with its vested interests.

To establish a centralized control over the Punjab, a semi-military despotic system of government was devised. A board of administration was set up in April 1849 that worked till January 1853 under the supervision of this semi-military system headed by two most prominent members; John Lawrence and Henry Lawrence. The board of administration was composed of high-profiled veteran civilian and military officers who were empowered with extensive administrative and judicial powers to govern and dispense justice. For the maintenance of law and order, military force was widely expanded with fresh enlistment of ten Punjabi regiments to assist military police force which was consisted of 8,000 soldiers.² The British policy was to uplift the native institutions and practices as long as they successfully dispensed justice to all.³ For that purpose, the British utilized the local knowledge which only the natives possessed.⁴ To establish an efficient intelligence and military surveillance system and to make a quick and prompt detection and prevention of crime system, a detective police, consisting of 7,000 soldiers were distributed amongst, 230 police district (thanas).⁵ The board invested vast powers to the native revenue collectors called tehsildars for controlling and organizing the police.⁶

The most crucial element of the colonial administrative structure was to organize the province of Punjab under a centralized administrative system, as Punjab was gradually

2 Yong, *The Garrison State*, 34.

3 Ch. Muhammad Ashraf, *Officers of the Punjab Commission, 1849-1879* (Lahore: Neda Publishers, 1996), 21-22.

4 B. S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under the British Rule 1849-1947* (Lahore: Book Traders), 44. Also see, Thomas. R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 9.

5 Nijjar, *Punjab Under the British Rule*, 46. Also see, Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab* (California: University of California Press, 1985).

6 Nijjar, *Punjab Under the British Rule*, 46.

emerging as sword arm of the Raj with a huge economic potential. The Punjab's territorial readjustment was essential, hence the demarcation of boundaries was drawn and divided into several divisions, cities, districts and tehsils. Each was headed by a Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner, respectively.⁷ The province was divided into seven divisions, with headquarters at Amritsar, Ambala, Jullundur, Leiah, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi consisting of 24 districts.⁸ Each district was sub-divided into tehsils which were further divided into zails, villages or mauzas.⁹

Trevaskis, Malcolm Darling, and S. S Thorburn provided firsthand accounts of the circumstances that led to many significant decisions taken by the colonial government regarding the Punjabi landed elite and the way British protected the mutual interests of colonial government and its intermediaries.¹⁰ C. A. Bayly, Thomas Metcalf, David Gilmartin,¹¹ Ian Talbot and Sarah Ansari examined how colonial rulers constructed the policy of cooption with the local elite who were identified as 'allies'. This policy of cooption was

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- 7 Colonial officers were delegated triple powers, criminal, fiscal and civil at various levels and in multiple capacities. The board of administration was assigned complete authority to control and supervise all administrative, judicial and revenue departments. Members of the board possessed powers in revenue matters, power of confirming, village settlements, reducing enormous assessments and consigning balances of revenue.
- 8 Mustafa Kamal Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 161. Also see, Ashraf, *Officers of the Punjab Commission*, 317.
- 9 Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy*, 162. Also see, Zahid Chaudhry, *Muslim Punjab ka Siyasi Irtiqa 1849-1947* [Urdu: Political Evolution of the British Punjab] (Lahore: Idara-e-Mutalia-e-Tarikh), 26.
- 10 Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Land of the Five Rivers: An Economic History of the Punjab From the Earliest Times to the Year of Grace 1890* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928). Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 56.
- 11 Christopher Bayly "Patrons and Politics in North India", In *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940*, eds., Anil Seal, Gordon Johnson and John Gallagher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). Thomas. R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1989).

tioned with the colonial politics of patronage.¹² David Omissi and Tan Tai Yong's insightful studies of the history of military recruitment in colonial Punjab show how recruitment was linked with the collaboration of the leading families drawn from the British-designated martial castes.¹³ This article argues that the nexus of collaborating elite and colonial state controlled and manipulated the tribal indigenous institutions to serve colonial interests. This exacerbated a general underdevelopment and aborted growth of local institutions in the district under colonial rule.

The policy of reorganization of boundaries was carried out in the district as well. The boundaries of the Mianwali district were altered quite radically. On January 1, 1861, the Trans-Indus tehsils of Bannu, Marwat and Isa Khel, which previously belonged to Dera Ismail Khan District along with Mianwali were included in the newly formed Bannu district.¹⁴ Leiah district was abolished. Mianwali and Isa Khel tehsils were formed into a sub-division. Leiah and Bhakkar tehsils were included into Dera Ismail Khan District. To preserve the tranquility of the Punjab, further re-demarcation of the boundaries took place on Nov 9, 1901. The NWFP province was separated from the Punjab.¹⁵ Mianwali district was constituted with four tehsils of Isa Khel, Mianwali, Bhakkar and Leiah. Mianwali became a district headquarter.

The British diverted their attention towards stability and control of the North-West Frontier. There were frequent border clashes among the tribes. The most dangerous and warrior tribes resided between the Swat River and the Gomal Valley. According to the British, the most fanatical and turbulent Pathan tribes lived on this stretch of boundary. The responsibility of controlling the warrior and rebel tribes was

12 Sarah F. D. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power, The Pirs of Sind, 1834-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

13 Yong, *The Garrison State*, 67; David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army 1860-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 111.

14 *Gazetteer District Mianwali 1915* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1989), 42.

15 *Gazetteer District Mianwali 1915*, 89.

given to the veteran colonial officials who were much acquainted with the tribal culture and norms and devoted years of their life to the study and consumption of tribal ideas and ways of life.¹⁶ Tribal territory needed a centralized administration. The Peshawar Valley provided a direct passage to Afghanistan through Khyber Pass.¹⁷ The entire area from Hazara to Dera Ismail Khan was fortified. There was a chain of fortified posts of 12 miles apart connected by good military road from Tonk Valley down to Sindh.¹⁸ These defensive arrangements were so complete that, the security of the Punjab was never threatened. Nevertheless, the Guide Corps and the Punjab Frontier Force could not permanently check the tribal raids. Tribal passion for freedom was one of the main reasons why so large an area of the tribal belt had never been subjected to a lasting administration by any empire.¹⁹

To deal with the tribes effectively, the British adopted two pronged policy:

- a. The tribal belt should be annexed to the Punjab and the NWFP be extended beyond the old Sikh boundary. Lord Elgin and Lord Lytton, the advocates of this policy, believed in the British Indian Empire extending its frontiers in Afghanistan.²⁰ As Lord Lytton said, "It painted a fancy prospect of bequeathing to India the supremacy of Central Asia and the revenues of a first-class power."²¹
- b. The other school advocated non-intervention in tribal affairs but strong measures to be taken on Indus Frontier. John Lawrence and Herbert Edwardes belonged to the second school of thought. Both were veterans in tribal affairs. They upheld a conventional view that the chain of mountains of the Trans Frontier territory, its harsh and unsuitable

16 Government of India, Foreign Department File, North-West Frontier Administration, 133.

17 Nijjar, *Punjab Under British Rule*, 42.

18 Nijjar, *Punjab Under British Rule*, 42.

19 Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 321.

20 Nijjar, *Punjab Under British Rule*, 63.

21 Nijjar, *Punjab Under British Rule*, 63.

environment and the aggressive tribesmen would act as a deterrent against Russia.²²

The British connection with Afghan affairs was closely allied with the question of defense of India, and the North-West Frontier. The general policy adopted by the British was to have control of Afghanistan in order to intercept the Russian expansion towards Afghanistan.²³ From 1878 onwards, with the outbreak of Anglo-Afghan War (1878), the tribal zone remained under turmoil and consistent skirmishes. The Hazara border was in a constant clamor, the warrior tribes of Khybar were embroiled in tribal feuds and were constantly assaulted by Zakka Khels, Mohmands and Zaimushta which harassed the Kohat line of communication. The Waziristan's Mehsud tribe often attacked Tank and its surrounding areas.²⁴ These inter-tribal clashes during Anglo-Afghan wars became troublesome for the British to concentrate on two fronts. Anglo-Afghan relations became intense which brought them on the brink of war, hence on several occasions war seemed imminent between 1890 and 1898. A large number of forts, posts and stations were erected to guard the vulnerable points. Towards the north-west of the Punjab is the cantonment of "Barookote" in Hazara, commanding the approach from the Indus to Haripur. The fort of Kohat was enlarged and strengthened. A fort was built to guard the Great salt mines at Bahadur Khel. The fort of Duleepgur in Bannu was capable of providing shelter to four regiments.²⁵ The fort of "Lukee" in Marwat was of considerable strength. Two miles from Dera Ismail Khan, there was a strong masonry fort called "Akalgur".²⁶

22 Nijjar, *Punjab Under British Rule*, 63.

23 Caroe, *The Pathans*, 413.

24 *Report on the Administration of Punjab 1849-51* (Lahore: Chronicle Press, 1854), 24.

25 *Report on the Administration of Punjab 1849-51*, 43.

26 *Report on the Administration of Punjab 1849-51*, 45.

Table 1: **DISPOSITION OF THE NWFP FORCE**

Stations & Districts	Infantry Regiments	Men	Cavalry Regiments	Men	Artillery Regiments	Men	Total Men
Peshawar	½	576	½	306	0	0	882
Hazara	1	910	0	0	6	72	982
Kohat	3 and 1	2,872	1	584	15	212	3,668
Bannu	1	928	1	584	26	195	1,707
D I Khan	1	1,072	1	584	9	33	1,689
D G Khan	1 & 1 Co.	1,016	2	1,168	8	116	2,300
Total	7 1/2 & 2	7,374	5 ½	3,226	64	628	11,228

SOURCE: *Report on the Administration of the Punjab, 1848-1851*, 48.

In the light of above mentioned risks and tumult, Viceroy Lord Curzon realized that there was a severe anomaly in the organization of the North-West Frontier as part of the Punjab. Under Curzon's forward policy, on 9th Nov 1901, the four Trans Indus districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan with a fifth, Hazara (Cis-Indus) were sliced from the Punjab by creating two separate provinces as Punjab and North West Frontier provinces.²⁷ Earlier it was proposed that Hazara, a Cis-Indus district would be intact with Punjab with its Tehsil 'Attock'. It was assumed that the interests of Hazara were very different from those of North-West border.²⁸

In this respect it was a matter of concern whether the Black Mountain tribes should continue to be managed and administered by the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, under the Punjab Government or whether it would pass over to newly carved province of NWFP.²⁹ In the final scheme on formation of new Frontier administration, it was concluded that Cis-Indus District of Hazara will be included in the Frontier for the following reasons:

1. The Gilgit Agency on the north and the new Peshawar agency on the south will be directly administered by the Government of India. The retention of Hazara with the Punjab

²⁷ Caroe, *The Pathans*, 414.

²⁸ Government of India, Foreign Department File (North-West Frontier Administration), 138-139.

²⁹ Government of India, Foreign Department File (North-West Frontier Administration), 138-139.

would therefore be an anomaly. According to W. M. Young, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab,

It would continue to interpose the more complex mechanism and the stereotyped procedure of a first class Provincial Government between the government of India and the tribes on the Hazara frontier.³⁰

2. The relations of the Swati and Pathan tribes of Hazara were so closely intermingled that they could not be separated. The suggested transfer of political control over Cis-Indus Black Mountain tribes and other tribes now part of Hazara in the lower Indus valley was quite impracticable. The authority that ruled in Hazara, should have control over adjacent independent tribes.³¹

3. The Black Mountain tribes were required to be dealt with by an officer who was experienced in Frontier management. It would be impossible for the Punjab Government to command the services of such an officer, as the young officers posted as Assistant Commissioners to Hazara would be occupied with judicial and revenue work. Hazara contained no sub-division where officers could be trained for political dealings with independent tribes.³²

4. A large majority of people in this region were Pathan. The principal tribes on its Frontier were Pathan who spoke Pushto. At the Census of 1891, the total population of Hazara was recorded as 516,288.³³ Statistics for the leading agricultural tribes of Hazara were as follows:

Awans	82,897
Gujars	83,167
Pathans	76,225

30 Correspondence dispatched letter to Punjab Chief Secretary in Frontier Report, 7.

31 Correspondence dispatched letter to Punjab Chief Secretary in Frontier Report, 7.

32 Punjab Administration Report (1861-62), 48.

33 Punjab Administration Report (1861-62), 48.

5. Retention of Hazara with the Punjab would result in its being an unwieldy district in the North-West of the Punjab. It would be a heavy charge from criminal and revenue point of view. Revenue in Hazara needed management since cultivation was dependent on rainfall. Moreover people of this tract retained their warlike characteristics hence they required direct control unlike the civilized population of Central Punjab. So the British argued that it would be a grave mistake to make such a large district in this part of the Province.

6. If Hazara was retained with the Punjab, the bulk of the Punjab Frontier Force with its cantonments would come into the new NWFP and would disturb the existing arrangement of the Frontier Force.³⁴

It was decided that Mianwali should be kept with the Cis-Indus province, being astride the Indus.³⁵ Although Mianwali (Cis-Indus) sub-division of the Bannu District shared its border with Bannu, it served as a bridge between the Punjab and the NWFP which lent it a strategic significance and its culture and civilization had more in common with that of the Punjab. The case of Trans-Indus tehsil of Isa Khel (Trans-Indus) however, needed a bit further enquiry. It was being considered that Isa Khel was inhabited by non-Pushto speaking Pathans and had little or no connection with the NWFP. Hence, it should be retained with the Punjab.³⁶

A question arises as to how would the retention of Isa Khel Tehsil in the Punjab affect the administration of other Trans-Indus Tehsils. Could it be managed by a Cis-Indus Deputy Commissioner without interfering with jurisdiction of Bannu District authorities? The British held the view that the inhabitants of the Isa Khel Tehsil were closely allied in race, politics, speech and old associations with those of the Mianwali Tehsil.³⁷ According to the census of 1891, the

34 *Punjab Administration Report (1861-62)*, 6.

35 *Punjab Administration Report (1861-62)*, 138-139.

36 *Punjab Administration Report (1861-62)*, 48.

37 *Gazeteer District Mianwali*, 34.

figures for the leading agricultural tribes, numbering over 3000 persons in the Isa Khel Tehsil were as follows:

Muslim Jats	13,3666
Awans	8,527
Pathans	20,266 ³⁸

Archival record indicates that the British incorporated Mianwali into Punjab for the reasons:

1. A large section of population in Isa Khel was Pathan, who spoke Punjabi as their mother tongue and were more closely assimilated with Punjabis than with Pathans. The only Pathans living in Isa Khel who had retained their language and other cultural traits were Khattaks. They were sub-divided into a clan called "Bhangi Khels" in the extreme north-east corner of the Isa Khel. They constituted a small part, so it was not worthwhile to alter the boundaries and include it into NWFP.³⁹

Table 2: THE AREA AND POPULATION STATISTICS OF THE VARIOUS TEHSILS OF THE BANNU DISTRICT

Name of Tehsil	Area in Sq. Miles	Population 1891	Population 1901
Bannu	439	120,324	130,354
Marwat	1,225	84,145	96,344
Isa Khel	714	63,898	63,360
Mianwali	1,469	103,909	112,014
Total	3,847	372,276	403,072

SOURCE: Government of India, Foreign Department File, North-West Frontier Province Administration, 8.

2. There was also a well-defined natural boundary known as the Maidani Range, separating Isa Khel off from the rest of Bannu District to the west. It was in the broad interest of the British that Isa Khel should remain with the Punjab, unless the whole of Trans-Indus Dera Ismail Khan was transferred to the NWFP.⁴⁰ The natural drawn out boundary would help in

38 *Gazeteer District Mianwali*, 3.

39 *Home Department Proceedings, Mianwali*, 3.

40 Correspondence dispatched letter to Punjab Chief Secretary in Frontier Report ,7

managing Isa Khel without interfering with the Bannu's jurisdiction.

3. Another significant factor described by W. M. Young was that the boundary of Mianwali Tehsil crossed over the Indus and included with Mianwali a number of villages on the Isa Khel side. If Isa Khel was passed over to NWFP, then further rectification of tehsil boundaries would be necessary to exclude the then Trans-Indus estates of Mianwali and to make the river boundary between NWFP and the Punjab.⁴¹ This would be a daunting task and would disturb the existing arrangement.

Table 3: THE APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF THE AREA AND POPULATION, CALCULATED FROM THE CENSUS RETURNS OF 1891 AND OF LAND REVENUE

District	Area (Sq. Miles)	Population	Revenue Rs.
Peshawar	2,444	703,768	1,102,626
Kohat	2,771	203,175	190,849
Bannu (Excl. Mianwali)	1,664	204,469	258,000
D. I. Khan (Excl. Cis-Indus Tehsil)	3,812	254,163	324,372
TOTAL	10,691	1,365,575	1,875,847
Mianwali (sub-division of Bannu)	2,183	167,807	193,000
Cis-Indus Tehsil of D. I. Khan	5,628	232,038	324,372
D. G. Khan District	5,606	404,031	515,697
TOTAL	13,417	803,876	1,033,069

SOURCE: Government of India, Foreign Department File, 11.

4. The retention of Isa Khel with the Punjab would keep the present Mianwali Sub-division intact. This sub-division along with the Bhakkar and Leiah Tehsils could make up a new district in the Punjab, possessing the advantage of having a railway communication.⁴²

41 Correspondence dispatched letter to Punjab Chief Secretary in Frontier Report, 8.

42 Government of India, Foreign Department File (North-West Frontier Administration), 128-130.

Breaking up the established administrative units of British India, the revenue system was disturbed, e.g., Peshawar District contained the richest and most highly assessed land in the Punjab. The separation of the NWFP deprived the Punjab of its big source of revenue.

Colonial Collaborators and Centralized Control

Towards the beginning of 19th Century the British followed a policy of non-interference in the socio-religious and cultural domain. However, after the second decade of 19th Century, the colonial policies encompassed the society, culture, politics and economy. This was primarily because of India's emerging agricultural and industrial potential which could transform it into a big commercial market for Britain. To extract economic benefits from India, it was imperative to preserve the peace in India and its sedentarised peasantry.⁴³ Similarly to extract maximum from the agricultural potential of the Punjab, British needed the support of natives.⁴⁴ The class of landed elite serving as intermediaries helped in extracting revenue and resources which caused 'official drain' in India as Irfan Habib maintained.⁴⁵ Hence, a local administration was structured in a tribal idiom which was instrumental for safeguarding the imperial interests. The grants and privileges accorded prestige and authority. Land became a mark of status in a tribal idiom. To be a landlord meant to be essentially a tribal leader.⁴⁶

To enforce the imperial system, a redefinition and reconstruction of power relations had to be constituted on land which was couched in the policy of cooption. By the beginning

43 Bipan Chandra, *Modern India* (New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1971), 56

44 Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism 1885-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Also see, Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab: 1849-1901* (Manohar, New Delhi, 1982), 1.

45 Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy 1858-1914* (Delhi: Tulika Print Communication, 2012). Also see, B. S. Saini, *The Social & Economic History of the Punjab, 1901-1939, Including Haryana & Himachal Pradesh* (Ess Ess Publications, 1975).

46 Habib, 45.

of 20th Century, the British policy of cooption created a class of rural magnates who were closely tied to the web of patronage. In their policy of 'search for allies', the British identified landed elite as colonial collaborators between the people and the State. Such a class of intermediaries was dependent on British revenue-free grants and privileges, which turned them into their henchmen in consolidating the imperial control in India.⁴⁷ The British used the local social and political influence of their allies to control the society and in lieu of their services, linked them to the power structure by developing a tribal local administrative system vied to consolidate their authority in the Punjab.⁴⁸ In view of this policy the rural magnates were incorporated in the colonial hierarchy as honorary magistrates, members of district board and legislative council. They conferred titles on the Muslim tribal heads who supported them. The authority conferred upon them was not restricted to the confines of tribal peripheries or locally constructed limits of zails, often headed by tribal leaders, but surpassed all limits.⁴⁹ A search for allies among the rural landed elite began, who were willing to collaborate with the British government to be part of the influence hierarchy. Its social fall out was a construction of binary between elite and commoners.⁵⁰ These colonial collaborators proved their loyalty during Anglo-Sikh wars and the War of Independence (1857) by providing financial support and military services.⁵¹ These leading rural families maintained their core network with the British government to own monetary benefits, rewards and a general economic

47 Mubarak Ali, *Jagirdari* [Urdu: Landlordism] (Lahore: Fiction House, 1996), 104.

48 Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 23. Colonial officials, in the early years of British rule, had lost trust in local landed elite particularly Sikhs of Central Punjab. They viewed their power as the legacy of the rule of Ranjit Singh. Their distrust was based on the premise that Sikh landed elite left by Ranjit Singh had no old connections with the villages.

49 Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 23. One Deputy Commissioner remarked in 1890 that zail should be ruled by the local landlord as they would be able to exercise more influence for the government.

50 Talbot, *Punjab and Raj*, 49

51 Talbot, *Punjab and Raj*, 49.

prosperity. Their social prestige was directly dependent on the influence and authority bestowed by the colonial officials. This patron-client system created economic disparity and mental division. The elite were the beneficiaries who flourished themselves at the expense of the rural poor.⁵²

The British administration was instrumental in bringing the rural magnates of the Punjab together and encouraging them to coalesce under the British patronage in a cohesive political group, the Unionist Party.⁵³ David Gilmartin states, "The structural foundation of Unionist ideology were rooted not in the protection of class interests of landlords but in the logic of British colonial system itself."⁵⁴ The ideology of Unionist Party was enshrined in land Alienation Act 1901 which aimed to bring stability in rural economy and protect the landed rights of peasantry and address their grievances. Hence the party integrated itself with the local communities with an ideology of cross-cutting communal harmony.⁵⁵ Until 1940, the Unionist Party was the only representative political party in the district. As the entire region was surrounded by landed elite, the colonial intermediaries, hence the anti-imperialist politics was an unrealized dream. They attempted to thwart any nationalist uprising as the Punjab Legislative Council was overwhelmed by the political influence of Unionists from 1923 to 1947.⁵⁶

52 Talbot, *Punjab and Raj*, 57. Hayat, Khattar family from Wah in Attock district and the Tiwanas from Shahpur region stood loyally by John Nicholas D.C, Rawapindi in 1857. He became first Indian in the Punjab to rise to the rank of Assistant Commissioner in 1871. Tiwanas raised 400 cavalry troops to aid the British. Umar Hayat Tiwana served in number of capacities until 1940s. See, Ian Talbot, *Khizar Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996).

53 Talbot, *Punjab and Raj*, 81.

54 Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 118.

55 Azim Hussain, *Fazl-e-Hussain, A Political Biography* (Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co, 1946), 150, 379.

56 Hussain, *Fazl-e-Hussain*, 116. Also see, Ashiq Hussain Batalwi, *Iqbal Ke Aakhri do Saal* [Urdu: Last two Years of Iqbal] (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1989), 47. Also see, Syed Noor Ahmad, *From Martial Law to Martial Law, Politics in the Punjab 1919-1958*, ed., Craig Baxter (Lahore: Vanguard, 1985), 125.

Punjab being the military labour market was crucial for British government during World War I. Local intermediaries acted as recruiting agents and massively funded the War fund.⁵⁷ The entire district management including divisional officers, tehsildars, magistrates and zaildars were mobilized in enlistment and expanding district soldier board to contribute in war efforts.⁵⁸ As a reward for their services, they received grants and titles. The prominent among them were, Malik Zaman Mehdi Khan, Sub-Divisional officer and his brother Tehsildar Malik Sultan Mehmud Khan.⁵⁹ The Assistant Recruiting Officer of the district was 'Khan Saifullah Khan'. Certain recruiters were non-officials which include, Khan Sahib Malik Laddhu Khan, Khan Sahib Malik Ameer with his son Risaldar Malik Muzaffar Khan, Malik Muhammad Qasim of Chakrala and Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim Khan of Isa Khel.⁶⁰ Bawa Nanak Singh, Treasury Officer, Lala Sita Ram Talwar, Public Prosecutor, Tilok Chand Mahrum, a teacher in Isa Khel Municipality School, whose poetry enlivened the war frenzy in people, Mian Fazal Ali made stimulating addresses to convince people to enlist in military.⁶¹ There was a general tendency among people to resist fighting in colonial army, despite the fact that the district had a pre-dominantly Pathan population.

Two rectangles were given to Malik Muhammad Qasim of Chakrala and Malik Ghulam Haider Khan, Zaildar of Darya Khan for enlisting 176 recruits respectively.⁶² Haider Khan also assisted in the transportation of troops operating against the Mahsuds and assisted the Camel Corps encamped near Darya Khan.⁶³ The first contribution in the first war loan of 1917 was from Nawab Atta Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh.

57 Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy*, 67.

58 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*; Yong, *The Garrison State*.

59 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, 5.

60 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, 6

61 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*.

62 War Services Record of Mianwali District, 7.

63 War Services Record of Mianwali District, 7.

He contributed a sum of One Lakh and Rs.3,000 by Khan Bahadur Muhammad Abdul Karim Khan of Isa Khel in a total amount of Rs 2,91,469-8-0.⁶⁴ Malik Atta Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh also paid for 30 British Cavalry Remounts.⁶⁵ An amount of Rs 3,11,4438-4-0 was contributed in the second war Loan of 1918 which include Rs 50,000 from the Nawab Atta Muhammad Khan and Rs 1,000 each from Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim Khan and Khan Sahib Malik Ameer Khan until March 31, 1919.⁶⁶ A reasonable amount was contributed in the second war loan by traders and moneylenders. A large contribution was made to the aeroplane fund in the district. Out of a total amount of 1,46,295, Rs 75,000 was donated by Nawab of Kalabagh in the aeroplane fund and Rs 35,000 for the purchase of remount. Rs 10,000 was contributed by Khan Bahadur Muhammad Abdul Karim Khan.⁶⁷ An amount of Rs.10,446 was contributed in the Imperial Indian fund and Rs. 46,928 had been donated in Red Cross and St. John Ambulance Association funds.⁶⁸

Mianwali essentially exhibited rural characteristics during colonial era. The control of feudals, the colonial intermediaries restricted all prospects of developments. When district was part of the North West Frontier Province, the Frontier Crime Regulation was enforced here, under which a Jirga used to give verdicts on various cases of crimes. With the separation of district from NWFP in 1901, the regulation was still in force whereas it was abolished from the NWFP. Serious criminal cases were decided by a council of elders, who were appointed by the deputy commissioner. The Jirga included a few Hindu members who used to be present during judgment on Muslims. The members of Jirga were illiterate and ignorant of laws and procedures, never took any evidence nor any council could appear before them. They only relied on

64 War Services Record of Mianwali District, 7-8.

65 M. S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War* (Lahore: Government Printing Press, 1922), 122.

66 Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, 8.

67 Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*.

68 War Services record of Mianwali District, 12.

rumours and false evidence. Before declaring any verdict they used to say “our secret and open enquiry has convinced us that the person is guilty of murder.”⁶⁹ The Jirga members were given grants and lands by the government and worked in the pleasure of deputy commissioner. The decisions were not impartial and influenced by the district management. There were several examples of dismissal of Jirga by deputy commissioner for displaying impartiality and neutrality in dispensing justice.⁷⁰

The landed elite erected their social super structure in the district, represented by “class.” Colonial state interfered in the social structure of rural society and sustained the local institutions by controlling them through district management. Subsequently, tribalism with its institutions was not diluted, however, the institutions which apparently worked in an oriental manner, were never autonomous. The indigenous population was quickly decimated, hence the state did not dissolve the cultural structure of communities. The British government conservatively sustained the power of the large landowners and encouraged cross-communal cooperation among landowning groups. They (land owning group) stunted the social progress in the district, degenerated the political culture and augmented such traditions which cultivated dissonance in society. The landed elite erected their social super structure in the district, represented by “class.” Poverty was the most dominant factor which subdued people, usurped their ability and strength to resist state’s oppressive policies or to raise insurgency. In the face of a centralized hegemonic control of colonial government, people developed a passive disposition *vis-à-vis* colonial state apparatus, instead of calling in question the suzerainty of the British. With a conformist mindset, politically unaware and inert natives, settled under British hierarchy quite easily. In a colonized territory the natives survived in a system of control,

69 Personal papers of Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi, Member All India Muslim League Council, 12.

70 Personal papers of Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi, Member All India Muslim League Council, 10.

domination and exploitation. They were left with no other choice but to accept the colonial political and social order particularly in the context of patron-client relationship between colonial elite and the state. The structure of mutual collaboration helped in suppressing the defiance or any kind of explicit remonstrance against the state. In the given conditions a full throated expression of resistance was not possible, hence the covert and passive resistance was the weapon of the weak. The centralized system of the British administration, judicial and court setup, police system and the changing of Mianwali into a Civil Station, provided people a relief against a virulent history of Mianwali which remained consistently struck by the onslaughts of imperialists and invaders, as district served as a corridor to their expeditions.

Conclusion

Colonialism had left disastrous cultural and economic effects which had often been ignored into the logic of modernization. There is a nexus between colonialism and cultural transformation. Cultural transformation is a manifestation and demonstration of colonial domination. The British struck at the heart of the social system of the Indian village, dissolved the rural communities by blowing up their economic basis in the name of so called "social revolution", a historic mission of colonialism only in the areas which had political and economic demeanor on the colonial agenda. So the modernizing impact of colonialism was a myth in which state itself was the only begetter of what little change it had made.

The West Punjab experienced the most extensive form of socio-economic transformation by the British in South Asia. The agricultural colonisation revolutionized the Punjab's agriculture. To extract maximum benefit from Punjab's potential resources, centralized administrative structure was formed to preserve the Punjab's tranquility. Local elite as colonial collaborators served as hinges between state and people to consolidate Imperial control. The economic policies in Punjab were seen as imperial benevolence, which was refutation of the argument that imperialism had a destructive

impact on the subject economies. Despite significant economic growth, the Punjab remained an underdeveloped region. The social structure of the Punjab represented a backward economy with debts and poverty. This entire situation was hostile to economic development.

The fallout of colonial rule was more disastrous on the barani regions like Mianwali district in the north-west of the Punjab. The people here have generally opted for military and similar other professions. The landed elite as intermediaries acted as recruiting agents, helped in asserting their authority over natives to extract revenue and precluded all possibilities of progress. The investment on Mianwali district was not considered cost effective as it was not likely to yield desirable output. Hence the agricultural prospects were not in consonance with the British ideology which believed that investment must yield economic benefits. Colonial state did not invest equally on all areas but only where it was profitable. Colonial state sustained, controlled and managed tribal indigenous institutions to consolidate imperial control over society at the expense of the benevolence of local people, which left Mianwali distinctively backward and essentially tribal under the British rule.