INTRODUCTORY

The present study focuses its attention on two Districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur and examines the socio-economic change that took place there from 1846 to 1901. The choice of the two districts is deliberate. They were two of the three districts that came under the British occupation in 1846, three years earlier than the rest of the Panjab. The third District of Kangra has been excluded because it was a hilly district and had an entirely different socio-economic set-up. Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, on the other hand, constituted one homogeneous area with a common language, culture and history.

Even though no methodological departures have been made, this study breaks new grounds. In the first place it focuses attention on socio-economic change. That aspect has, by and large, been neglected so far by the historians dealing with the area. Secondly, an attempt has been made here to write such a history only of a well-knit region. Most of the time historians have concerned themselves with political history and that too of the Panjab as a whole. The writer of this thesis claims to have viewed the society under study in its state of flux. That is something which has not been satisfactorily done so far.

This work is based on the new source material that has escaped the attention of the scholars almost completely till now. It is based on untapped primary sources variously
scattered in the mass of records at:

a) Revenue Record Offices of the Deputy Commissioners of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.

b) Record of the Commissioner’s Office, Jullundur.

c) Old Record Room of the Financial Commissioner, Panjab at Chandigarh.

d) National Archives of India, New Delhi.

At (a) in the Sadar Kanugo’s Record Room are lying the Revenue records in *urdu shikasta* which give numerous details concerning the settlement of different villages belonging to Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts and the *mafi* registers in Urdu of the four Tehsils of Jullundur. The *mafi* registers contain *shaire-nash-jaacordaraan, shak rayzanah* of Jullundur, N.D. and *rival-e-am* of the middle of the nineteenth century of the four Tehsils of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. Both the Revenue records and the *mafi* registers proved extremely useful for the preparation of this thesis.

No less useful was the material lying at (b) but it was not quite easy digging it out from the voluminous records lying there. Though arranged under the 'head system' and neatly put in different files for different villages and their inhabitants, they are too voluminous to be handled by people collecting material for doctoral dissertations. That they must have frightened many a researcher is clear from the fact that when the present writer went to have a look into them, they were still covered by the dust that had started accumulating on them since they were first put in the place.
At (e) too, there lies much useful information. The entire record consists of the spare copies of the correspondence between the then Government of India and its superior and subordinate agencies to be used by that Government during the summer season when all the official work was conducted from Simla. Unfortunately, it was extremely difficult fishing out the relevant material for this thesis from all that correspondence. Part of the difficulty was caused by the fact that much of this useful record is neither indexed nor kept in a way to suit any researcher, experienced or inexperienced. Many files appear to have been destroyed when this correspondence was shifted from Simla to Chandigarh and the rest are in a mess. Weekly Proceedings (Revenue) of the Government of the Panjab from 1852 to 1865 which are completely intact and the stray files of the Proceedings for the following years - dumped in the corner of the record room - constitute useful source and helped amply in the preparation of this thesis. These Proceedings generally relate to pension cases, jagirs, petitions, rent rolls, sale of waste lands and the creation of tehsils and districts. The Proceedings in the Departments of Land Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce from the years 1871 to 1901 are another set of records lying here which yielded vital information on land revenue, agriculture, irrigation and the ups and downs in the general condition of the people of the two districts during the period under study. The material requisitioned from these Proceedings supplemented the material earlier discovered for this thesis.
at (d), the National Archives of India.

The hitherto-unnoticed information obtained from these sources has helped the writer of this dissertation to do something not attempted before. It enabled him to bring out the socio-economic change that occurred in the two Districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur in the first fifty-five years of the British rule there. For all he knows no one has ever claimed to have done that before, not even Dr. G.S. Chabbra in his book entitled 'Social and Economic History of the Panjab from 1849 to 1901.' That work certainly gives a good deal of information about the social and economic life of the people of the Panjab, but unlike the present work takes the whole of the Panjab as his unit of study and by and large refuses to depict that society in its flux. As one finishes reading that work one is left with the impression that Dr. Chabbra has by and large looked upon the social and economic life of the Panjab before 1849 to 1901 as static, with occasional jerks brought about by the various measures adopted by the British.

Dr. Chabbra's treatment of the Land Revenue Policy of the British, for instance, will illustrate the point. He refers to the British insisting on a cash payment of the land revenue to them, and recognises the revolutionary character of that innovation but refuses to measure the great social change brought about by the introduction of cash nexus as an important element in their Land Revenue Administration in the Panjab. He has failed to notice that the institution of fixed cash-demand
as land revenue by the British went a long way to bring about the extinction of village brotherhood and to help a new class of money-lenders make its appearance. Dr. Chhabra's reluctance to view the society in flux is also reflected in the way he has dealt with the peasant indebtedness during the period 1849 to 1901. He mentions the causes of indebtedness as if they suddenly emerged out of nothing and ends his short examination of that indebtedness by saying that the Government passed the Land Alienation Act and successfully controlled the money-lender. He completely ignores the series of steps that the Punjab Government took and the circumstances that had forced the Government to take these steps as the background to the passage of the Land Alienation Act. He makes little mention of the famine of 1876-78 which compelled the Government to appoint a Famine Commission. Naturally he ignores the fact that on the recommendation of the Famine Commission, the Government subsequently had passed the Land Improvement Act of 1883 and the Agricultural Loans Act of 1884. Dr. Chhabra's failure to take into account important facts of the socio-economic history of the Panjab was obviously the result of his not seeing history as a story of continuous change. He seems to have convinced himself that it was not necessary for him to do so because he was dealing with the whole of the Panjab and felt justified in not getting preoccupied with the socio-economic change which differed from district to district.

This dissertation deals with a specific area of the
Panjab under the British and so, its author could not take the attitude adopted by Dr. Chabbra. The purpose, that the writer of this dissertation has sought to achieve, is to depict the social change that occurred in the two districts chosen for study. He did it on two presumptions: (1) that Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts possess a cultural identity which makes the region a uniform contiguous unit fit for historical analysis, and (ii) that an analysis of social change in the second half of the nineteenth century of such an identified area would help, albeit in a small way, in giving better interpretation of Modern Indian History than the one in vogue at the moment.
CHAPTER I

THE STRUCTURE OF RURAL SOCIETY IN THE JULLUNDUR DOAB: 1846

In 1846 the district of Jullundur covered the whole of the southern portion of the Rist Doab. It was bounded on the south and east by the Sutlej, on the west by the Beas which separated it from the Lahore Kingdom and on the north it touched the District of Hoshiarpur. Lying between North latitudes 30° 57' & 31° 37' and East longitudes 75° 3' & 76° 14', its boundaries formed a triangle. The sides of that triangle were marked out by the rivers Sutlej and Beas, and the apex was formed by their confluence. The base rested on the western frontier of the Hoshiarpur District. The upper boundary of the district was separated from the Beas by the poyyanaq of Kapurthala, and oblong strip of territory belonging to the Ahluwalia Raja of Kapurthala and extended for the most part parallel to the banks of the River. The continuity of the


2. Ibid. cit.


boundary adjoining Hoshiarpur was broken up by the isolated
parvanah of Phagwara also belonging to the Kapurthala Chief.
The Phagwara territory cut deep into the Jullundur District
for about 15 miles, and thus disfigured what would have been
a regular triangle. The lower boundary was formed by the
Sutlej river.

The population of Jullundur proper in 1846 was between
40,000 to 50,000. The population of Kapurthala, Phagwara,
Rahon, Banga, Nur Mahal, varied from 5,000 to 10,000 in each
case.

The Hoshiarpur District lay between latitudes 32° 4'
and 30° 58', and longitudes 76° 42' and 75° 32'. The
Hoshiarpur District, named after a town of that name, was the
northern district of the Jullundur Doab. It was bounded on
the north and west by the river Beas, on the east by the
Sutlej, and on the south by the Jullundur District. The
district formed an oblong figure lying, for the most part,

5. Loc. cit.

6. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), MAI, Prodg. No. 2443, dated
31st December, 1847, J. Lawrence, Commissioner &
Superintendent, Trans-Sutlej States, to Lt. Col. Henry
Lawrence, Agent to Governor-General, No. 690, dated 28th
November, 1846. Para-12.


8. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), Prodg. No. 9443, dated 31st
December, 1847, J. Lawrence, Commissioner and Superintendent,
Trans-Sutlej States, to Lt. Col. Henry Lawrence, Agent to
Governor-General, No. 690, dated 28th November, 1846.
Para-17.
between the rivers Beas and Sutlej. The two rivers formed its north-west and south-east boundaries. Its other limits were formed on the south-west by the Jullundur District, and, on the north by the Kangra District.

About one-third of the area of the Hoshiarpur District was hilly and the remaining two-third was a level sandy plain. The former also included a valley (doon) running along the entire length of the district. This valley was partly open and plain, and partly broken up by hilly spurs, stretching inwards from the hills on either side. The plains were unbroken by any hills or undulations worthy of general mention but were intersected by a number of mountain torrents, the waters of which eventually, flowed into the Sutlej and the Beas, in the Jullundur District. The length of the district in the year 1646 was ninety-four, from north-west to south-east and its breadth was twenty to thirty-two miles. The total area of the district was two thousand two hundred and thirty-two square miles. The soil of Hoshiarpur was inferior to that of Jullundur. Further it had more natural but uncontrolled


12. The hill torrents okhah were in two main drainage channels called the Eastern or white Bein, and the Western or Black Bein.

irrigation which caused great havoc when rains were heavy. The
district then was flooded in every direction by hill streams.
Though these streams fertilised the country prodigiously in
the long run, they did immediate damage in particular places by
rendering the land completely barren.

Besides Hoshiarpur, other important towns in the district,
which had a population of 10,000 or more were Miani, Mukerian,
Urmur Tanda and Garhshankar.

The ancient history of the Jullundur District was not
known for certain in 1846. There were, however, many legendary
accounts prevalent among the people as to how it had come to be
founded. According to one account, Jullundur was the capital
of Lava or Lo, the son of Rama, prior to his founding the city
of Lahore. According to another account given in Padma Purana,
"the city of Jalandhara was the capital of the great Daitya
King Jalandara," so called, because he had been brought up in
the ocean i.e., under jal. (i.e. water).

The king, according to Jalandhara Purana, was ultimately,
crushed to death by a mass of mountains which God Siva had placed

14. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), MAI, Prodg. No. 2443, dated
31st December, 1847 J. Lawrence, Commissioner & Superintendent
Trans-Sutlej States, to Lt. Col. Henry Lawrence, Agent to
Governor-General, No. 690, dated 26th November, 1846. Para-17.
15. Ibid., Para-19.
16. Hindu mythological God.
17. S.K. Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II (Historical). Para-1.
upon him when he lay prostrate; the flames sprung out of the king's mouth, and formed Jawala Mukhi; his back was under the upper part of the Doab, and his feet under the lower part of the Doab at Multan. After the back of the Jalandhara, supposed to be lying in the Doab, the area begun to be called by the people the Jullundur nitha or Jullundur pith, which then covered a wider area than in 1846. It was believed that then the Beas and the Sutlej rivers ran separately as far as Multan. A proof of the fact that it was this Jalandhara who had given the name to the Doab, was believed to lay in the existence of a tank which was called Barinda Par. Barinda was the queen of Jalandhara.

If one were to shed off the mythological element in the Jalandhara legend, then one is left with the probability of one Jalandhar laying the foundation of a kingdom between the Beas and the Sutlej which kingdom seems to have decayed subsequently. There is no mention of the Jalandhara in the Mahabharata but Haidryavani by Kalhan contains many scattered references to the kings of Jalandhara. A local chronicler says that from Bikramjit for four centuries and a quarter, or till about 375 A.D., Jullundur was held by Jalandhar Nath, a 1064, and his successors. It then passed into the hands of the

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Rajput Rajas, who held it till they were ousted by the
Muhammedans.

The Rajput family, ruling Jullundur before the Muslim
conquest, belonged to chanderbansi clan of the Rajputs, who
traced its genealogy from one Susarma Chandra, and asserted that
their ancestors held the District of Multan and took part in the
great war of Mahabharata. They lost their country as a result of
the war and retired under the leadership of Susarma Chandar to
the Jullundur Doab. Here they founded a state. That may be
accepted as a historical fact, otherwise it would be difficult
to explain some scattered notices in the Rajatarangani, also
hints in inscriptions, and information left by the Chinese
pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang. All these references point to the
existence of an independent kingdom in the Doab for many
centuries before the Muhammedan conquest. Jullundur town was
the capital of the state.

In the seventh century this Rajput State, as described
by Hiuen Tsang, was 167 miles long from east to west, and 133
miles broad from north to south and included, in addition to
the plain portion of the Doab, the Kangra hill states of modern
times, the States of Chamba, Mandi and Suket in the hills, and
Satadru, or Sirhind in the plains. This State was destroyed
by the Muslims from the north-west in the tenth century A.D.

21. S.A., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II (Historical), Para-1.
23. B.O., Hoshiarpur, Vol. XIII A, 1904, Chapter I, Section B-
For the next seven hundred years the Jullundur Doab, as indeed the whole of the Panjab, was under Muslim rule. The Muslim rulers of the Panjab took to persecuting the Sikhs, who had within a couple of centuries of the death of their founder in 1529, became a numerous community in the Panjab. This Muslim persecution of the Sikhs was particularly severe in the Jullundur Doab and provoked a strong reaction. It was only after the transformation of the Sikhs into a political and military organisation by Guru Gobind Singh that the people partly escaped the Muslim tyranny. The new religion drew its converts largely from the Panjab agricultural tribes as the democratic ideas inherent in Sikhism appealed more to them than to the aristocratic minded Rajputs, and it was from amongst the Juts of the Central Panjab that the new religion got its recruits. The inevitable result of this was that the Juts obtained a dominating position in the new organisation.

After a long and bitter struggle the Sikhs finally succeeded in 1759 to break the Muslim domination in the Panjab, including the Jullundur Doab, and there began an era of Sikh confederacies. The composition of the confederacies determined the social set up in the Panjab even in 1846. The confederacies had powerful leaders. These leaders had minor chiefs under them who again had subordinates. Inside the confederacies, each Sirdar or Chief obeyed his superior lord just as long as he thought fit. If he felt strong enough, he would declare himself

25. Jat was called Jut in Panjab.
independent, or transfer his services to another Chief, or even to another confederacy. The country conquered by the Sikhs was parcelled out among the big chiefs to feed themselves, their armed retainers and principal troops. The land was divided among their subordinate-chiefs, who in their turn assigned villages to their dependents for their support. Various tenures springing from this system were known as *pattidari, girdari, tabadari* and *jagirdari*.

By 1765, the time when the Sikhs attained 'independence,' the chiefs of the confederacies had hastily divided the whole country among themselves. They were twelve in number. The most prominent among them in the Jullundur Doab were Suker Chakias, Bhangias, Ahluwalias, Phulkians and Ramgarhias. The chiefs of these confederacies and their followers were then looked upon as forming one commonwealth, but having tasted the fruit of lordship once, they were constantly at war with one another. The stronger ones tried, by force or by fraud, to make themselves masters of the possessions of the weaker chiefs.

Most of the Misal Chiefs in the Jullundur Doab were of the Jat or Jut caste who had left their homes in Mahajha — a tract north of and around Amritsar — and having conquered the

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26. S.K., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II (Historical). Para-16.
28. S.K., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II (Historical). Para-16.
29. Tract lying between River Ravi and River Beas was called Mahajha.
Doab had parcelled it out among themselves and their followers.

One time marauders, they had started feeling secure in their possessions in the Doab but only for a while. The situation was in a state of flux once again very soon. The greater chiefs had begun swallowing up the possessions of the smaller ones. This came to a stop when Ranjit Singh and the Ahluwalia Chief, Fateh Singh, two sworn brothers, appeared on the scene. All the great chiefs soon fell victims to their absorbing power, particularly that of the former. But though Ranjit Singh humbled the Chiefs, he did not proceed to extremities against their feudal subordinates and so basically the social structure of the Jullundur Doab people remained what it was under the Misaal. He had left here and there a few villages with the descendants of the Misaal Chiefs subject to their military subordination as well as with those early petty adventurers, who had now sided with him in reducing the old


32. Leg. cit.
Mislal leaders to the level of jagirdars. The deposed Chiefs were not only required to supply a proportionate number of men for the army but, in some cases, to render personal service also. The rest of the country was either given on a similar tenure to other followers of the Sikh Government or was held by Naamis or Governors who were appointed by Ranjit Singh, and who paid, or rather agreed to pay to the central coffers, a certain amount of revenue for the country committed to their charge.

The whole of the district of Hoshiarpur came under the suzerainty of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the year 1813 after he had beaten back the half-hearted attempts of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. The two hilly Rajas, Umed Singh of Jaswan and Gobind Chand of Datarpur also had, by then, admitted the supremacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

With Ranjit Singh's becoming the master of the entire Jullundur Deab in 1818, almost the whole of the hilly portion of the Hoshiarpur District and Jaswan doon (valley) was assigned to the jagirdars. The principal jagirdars were the deposed Rajas of Jaswan and Datarpur, Baba Sadhu Singh, the Sodhi of Anandpur; and Baba Bedi Bikram Singh of Una. The areas forming

33. S.K., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II-Historical, Para-27.
34. S.K., Hoshiarpur, 1879-84, Para-22.
Hajipur, Mukerian and the tract of the surrounding country below the Shiwalik hills were given to the royal Prince Sher Singh and these were governed by Sher Singh's agent Lenna Singh Majitha. Dasuya and the adjoining territory was given to Shahsada Tara Singh. Most of the villages in the plains were held by the descendants of the original Sikh adventurers who had first divided the country but now they were holding only small portions of these original possessions as jagirs.

The portions of the district which remained unalienated to jagirdars formed part of the Jullundur jurisdiction and were governed by deputies of the Jullundur Governor. The portion so governed, was however, comparatively small. The first Nasim of the Jullundur Doab was Divan Mokham Chand.

Within seven years of the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, Jullundur Doab became a part of British territory. That was three years before the rest of the Panjab could be annexed by the British. On 10th March, 1846 John Lawrence, the first British Commissioner, took charge of the newly acquired territory, known officially as Trans-Sutluj States and geographically as Jullundur Doab. He had under him an area of

36. A suppositious son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
38. S.R., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter-II (Historical) Para-27.
thirteen thousand square miles with a population of two millions and a half.

The British divided the Jullundur Doab into three districts Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Kangra. The first two of these districts were in the plains and the third on the hills. The British found the populace of Jullundur Doab industrious, frugal and well-behaved. Predominant caste groups were of Juts, Ranghers and Pathans. A few of them were Sikhs too. The tenure on which they held lands appeared to the British masters as a bhaighara one. The new British Administrators in the Doab believed that they could be converted into loyal subjects by kind treatment and light land taxes.

To the British administration the villages in the Jullundur Doab in 1846 appeared to be broadly of two categories, Khalsa villages and Jagir villages. Khalsa villages were earlier owned by the Lahore Government and held by the village communities. Their land revenue was collected by the Government through its own agency. That was unlike the way revenue was collected from the Jagir villages. In those villages land revenue was collected by jagirdars who had served or were serving the Lahore Kingdom in different forms. Most of the villages in


42. Ibid., Para-49.
the Jullundur Doab were held by this powerful class.

In 1846, on the eve of the British becoming the masters of the Jullundur Doab, the 57 *talukas* with 739 Khalsa villages in Jullundur District fetched a land revenue of Rs.9,08,786 to the Sikh Government. The Khalsa villages of the Jullundur District held by the village community were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castle</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadans</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juts and Sikhs</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajputs</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oujars</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>739</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hoshiarpur District contained 55 *baronies* or *talukas* comprising 1228 villages belonging to the Government. These Khalsa villages were held by different castes as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castle</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadans</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juts and Sikhs</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajputs</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,228</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total revenue yielded by these villages to the Sikh Government was Rs.8,10,763/-.

Broadly speaking the villages in the Jullundur District were thus of two types, which could easily be called *jut* type

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Gujars type. The pattern of construction of houses in the villages used by Juts and Gujars was generally approved and followed by other communities too. They differed only slightly in their form and shape. A jut village would have a gateway around it. The village itself would have narrow lanes flanked by high walls with wooden doors. A house in such a village usually consisted of a small yard with rooms or verandhas on two or more sides. The houses were constructed close to one another and very little space was wasted. In the Gujar type, the houses were built less in long rows and more in detached groups. They used to have spacious enclosures for cattle between the lane and the houses. These enclosures used to have low walls. The Dogar and Rajput villages were of Gujar type, with the difference that the Rajput villages looked decayed and their houses were constructed more with a view to secure the privacy of the family than to accommodate the cattle, which were principally looked after by the Dogars and the Gujars.

The zamindars' houses in both kinds of villages were generally not roomy enough and did not have much of furniture too. Infact they had nothing much to boast of. All that they contained was just sufficient to meet the bare necessities of the occupants and was of the type which was necessary for daily use in the village life. The zamindars did not possess many

beds (manjas). The few that were there in the house were often, when not in use hung up on the wall of the yard. Of course, the beds were often used as platforms for drying grain and chillies. The other furniture in the house consisted of a few low chairs (pira) usually without any back and with a string seat; some mats (mura) made of cane-fibre; a box (sanduk) in which jewellery and other valuables were kept; another box (patiera) made of garr stalks of cane and covered with leather for storing clothes; the spinning wheel (sharkha) and spindles (takla) of the women with basket (tokra) to keep the cotton, another basket (katni) to keep the roles of cotton ready to be spun; a cotton gin (bain) a pestle and mortar (ukhal and mola); a rolling pin and a board on which dough was rolled (heina and shakla); a sieve (chanani), a hand mill (shakki), a churn (shaatti) which was an earthen vessel resting on a wooden frame (gaaterebha) with the churning staff (madiant) and cover (kur); the stove on which milk simmered, and its cover (bharoli and shabari); a stand (divat) for a lamp (diva); a brush and a broom (ibaru and buhari); and dishes with pots and pans of all sorts. Besides these, a samindar's house was stufied with a receptacle for grain called (bukhari or sothi) made of clay and chopped straw, a cupboard with a wooden sliding door (panunki) and a well gear and a few other agricultural implements.

The samindars' houses were built of rough blocks of mud, dug out of small pond (toba or chapri) or of sun-dried bricks.

47. S.K., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter III. Para-20.
made by spreading mud on the ground and cutting them into shape with a sickle, or made in mould, or of roughly formed hemispherical lumps of mud, dried in the sun. The roofs of the houses were flat shaped and, together with walls plastered with a mixture of mud and cow-dung. Entrance into the house would be from a door leading into a shed (deorhi) which opened on a yard (behra). The yard was not roofed. On one side of the yard was a room (dalan) in which the family lived and slept, and off the dalan there were one or more closets (kothris) in which clothes, household utensils, grain and straw were stored. Roof was the sleeping place for the family in the hot weather. In the winter, dalan and closets were used for this purpose. When there was no separate building for the cattle, the yard was used and some times, one of the closets served the purpose of stabling the cattle. The fire place (shhula), and the shaunke or rasol where the food was prepared, were usually in the yard but sometimes they were located in the dalan. The roofs were reached by wooden ladders, very commonly left out in the lane.

The houses of Gujar Muhammadans did not present the same uniformity as those of Jat Sikhs. Unlike the houses of the Sikh juts which were packed together, their houses had a good deal of space to themselves. Often the entrance from the lane was by a gate-way leading into a yard with walls four or five feet high; and on one side of this lay-out was the dalan.

with its closets. The roof was reached by flight of steps made of mud. The cattle were kept in the yard, and in it or in the dalan was the cooking place, chhule - shanke, or if roofed, suha.

The villages of Sainis and Mahotons resembled those of jutā. The Arian villages were of varying types but broadly of a nature which was intermediate between the jutā and the Rajput types. The Arian villages used to have a poor look, and were invariably in dilapidated condition.

When the British took over the Jullundur Doab, the houses on the outermost were built with their fronts inwards and backs forming a sort of outer wall of the village. The entrance was usually by a gateway sometimes provided with a door. It was roofed, and had platforms on both sides.

In rainy season, gateways served the purpose of gossip centres for the villagers. In the immediate vicinity of the village were grouped the sugar mills, yards and small forced enclosures containing stocks of fuel and little ricks of maize stalks and broken wheat straw. One or two small tanks or ponds (tuhā or chaper) bordered by pīnak or ber trees were the common features of every village in the Jullundur District. These tuhās or chappas used to get dry before the rains, but till then were used for watering cattle and for preserving the wheels of sugar mills and other wood from drying out. This

50. loc. cit.
water was also used for miscellaneous household purposes, but drinking water was obtained from the wells which always stood close to the homesteads.

Small monuments of buildings found in the immediate outskirts of the villages, were probably erected in honour either of the ancestors of the village, or of local deities such as Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, Gugapir, Bala Shah and others.

The lower classes of the village menials such as *ghubras* and *chamars* used to live by themselves in a separate group of houses or on the outskirts of the homesteads. Furthermore, *ghubras* and *chamars* among themselves had houses separated from each other on the grounds of class-consciousness and community-consciousness.

The houses and the furniture therein in the villages of the plains of the Hoshiarpur District were almost similar to those in the Jullundur District. The houses were flat roofed and made of mud and all collected together in one place. Their fronts were built to face inwards, and the backs of outermost houses formed an outer wall of the village. The few entrances into a village used to be narrow and the approaches to them from outside were hemmed in with thorn hedges to prevent cattle from damaging crops. One or two tall trees, usually *pindal* or *bor* were conspicuous places under which the elders of the villages assembled occasionally to discuss matters of importance for the village community.

51. *Loc. cit.*

Almost all the houses were built on the same pattern. The cattle were tethered in the courtyard, on one side of which was the dwelling house. The dwelling house itself was called kotha and in front of it was the verandah sometimes called sabat. Inside the kotha were two or three kothies (mud receptacles for grain), a basket (petara) for clothes, and a number of earthen pots for keeping cotton or gur. The kotha also had a couple of beds, and some clothes hanging on a string stretched across a corner. Sabat (verandah) was the most important place in the village house. In it were kept things of daily importance such as stored seeds put in a kothi, charkha (spinning wheel), chaki (handmill), chai (winnowing basket) and a bharoli (an earthen vessel in which the daily milk was made to simmer to prepare the useful butter).

The furniture of a villager's house consisted of a few mats (hinna) made of sugarcane refuse and pira (a low seat) for the spinning wheel. A huka (smoking pipe) completed the furniture of the house.

It may be worth noting that the pattern of the villages in the two Districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, was completely different from that of the villages on the hills. Everyman in a village on the hills resided on his own farm in one corner of which he would construct his cottage from dry bricks. This cottage generally had a double roof. The owner lived on the

53. Ibid., occupations, Page-84.
54. Loc. cit.
lower floor with his family and the upper storey was used for putting the household timber and the grain of the previous harvest. The upper roof was always made of the thatch, neatly trimmed into a thick mass. During the rainy season many families used the upper portion for sleeping. In order to maintain privacy, the place in front of the cottage was encircled by a hedge of trees and brambles and was kept neat and clean. The higher caste Rajputs generally had their houses in the highest and most secluded places, whereas the tenants and people of lower castes had their houses at comparatively lower levels. An interesting result of this practice was that the tenants cultivated the best low lying lands of the village, leaving the very poor and stony lands for the high caste proprietors.

The villages in both the Jullundur and the Hoshiarpur Districts as they existed in 1846 gave the impression of having maintained their traditional form and shape throughout the ages. They seemed to have lasted when nothing else lasted. Dynasty after dynasty had tumbled down, revolution had succeeded revolution, Hindus, Pathans, Mughals, Marathas, Sikhs, all became masters one after another, but the village communities had remained the same. In 1846, even after the turbulent Misal period and the shake-up given to them by the disturbing hands of Ranjit Singh's governors, village communities still existed

as little republics having nearly everything they wanted for themselves, and almost independent of all foreign relations.

This was because every succeeding generation continued to follow in the footsteps of its ancestors. The sons took the places of their fathers, lived on the same site within the village and occupied the same houses as their forefathers had occupied. They tilled the same lands unless driven out which would be very rare for they would more often than not maintain their posts through times of disturbances and convulsions and acquire strength sufficient enough to successfully resist pillage and oppression. They continued to follow the methods of cultivation which their forefathers had followed and did not seem inclined to change anything: the fields were the same and similar were the techniques to plough them. The daily gossip of the woman drawing water at the well, or sitting over cotton, spinning wheel had been a familiar thing since times immemorial.

On the eve of the British take-over in 1846, life in the rural areas in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts was of the communal type and was considerably self-sufficing in its needs. The fluctuations of individual fortune might often render it convenient that some would take more and others less land than their original shares, but such interchanges were always open to re-adjustment which were, in most cases, amicably settled by

58. Ibid., Page-173.
the leading members of the brotherhood.

Unlike the villages in what was then called the N.W. Provinces, the villages in the region under study were founded by colonists or tribes of great strength and character. In N.W. Provinces, on the other hand, the villages were owned by families descended from an ancestor who was once a ruler, a conqueror or a grantee, and a great many from revenue farmers and auction purchasers. They did not belong to the agricultural classes and had little attachment to land. Instead of tilling the land themselves they depended on tenants to cultivate their lands. In the very nature of things, therefore, individualisation of land and the development of individual interest had emerged and were developing rapidly even before the British occupied the area. A logical consequence of this phenomenon was the decline in the influence of the Panchayats and Lumbardars. The land holders deposited the due from their revenue in the local treasury and ignored the headmen of their villages and there had come into existence not only independent petty proprietors, but also capitalist landlords.

The villages in Jullundur Deab were founded by colonists and tribes of superior strength. They were from agricultural class and had retained more than elsewhere, the sense of union. The shares in the village land were more or less ancestral.

61. Ibid., Page-168.
62. Ibid., Page-169.
Subsequent events might have changed the relative proportion of the actual shares as these had originally stood. But the partnership of the original shareholders was still preserved in the remembrance of the brotherhood that had first inhabited the village. Its restoration was often deemed a matter of family concern and honour. Stresses of season and of taxation under the Sikh regime often broke the shareholders from the homesteads but only for a while. The patrimony, so deserted, fell into the hand of the nearest of the kin. But it was held merely in trust and was restored to the owner whenever he returned. This rule was faithfully observed. The idea of brotherhood, community and clannish feelings clubbed the villagers of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur into a union. The feelings that land belonged as much to the family as to the individual, thus, was very strong. Joint responsibility was consequently much stronger in the Panjab villages than in those of N.W. Provinces where, as already mentioned, the sentiments of joint landlordship seemed to be fast decaying when the British acquired the villages in that area.

Besides the cultivating community, the villages in the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts contained a nearly complete establishment of occupations and trades to enable its inhabitants

64. S.K., Jullundur, 1852, Paras 191-92.
66. Ibid., Page-168.
to continue their collective life without assistance from any person or body external to them. There were hereditary artisans and hereditary menials who served the landowning class of agricultural tribes. These artisans and menials continued to perform their duties throughout the year and received customary payments at the time of the harvest. The payments were usually in the shape of allowance in kind according to a fixed scale.

For this reason the houses of the members of the brotherhood and of their dependants were usually built close together in some convenient part of the village. The houses of the village menials were usually placed on the outskirts of the abadi. Sometimes their houses and those occupied by men of "impure" castes were at a considerable distance from the abadi. The proprietors in a typical Jullundur-and-Hoshiarpur village were often united by realities of kinship while a strong clannish feeling kept the villagers together. A strong law of pre-emption prevalent in these districts, as also elsewhere in the Panjab, which excluded strangers from the village cultivating community, further strengthened the village brotherhood. This right of re-emption was, in fact, closely observed and the village community was ever watchful that it was not violated.

Under the Sikh rulers the repugnance to admit strangers often wilted under pressure of the Government demand, and outsiders were allowed to share the rights which had become burdensome. But landowners so imposed on the village were fortunate if they could secure some small grain fee at harvest time as an acknowledgement of their superior title. They would be lucky if they got petty fees periodically, or on special occasions such as marriages.

This feeling of village-community was so endemic that it would affect the outlook of even estates which were jointly held by several castes. These castes were apt to quarrel among themselves about their respective shares, but they never betrayed the general interest of the village community. In Muslim communities, religion also played a part in strengthening the feeling of village kinship. There, the rules of the sharah were strictly observed and no member of the community was permitted to transfer his property to the residents of another village even though he belonged to the same caste. The village communities thus showed great aversion even for a kinsman becoming a shareholder unless he resided in the village.

Social institutions prevalent in the two districts further strengthened the self-sufficient nature of the village community. There were the common rules of inheritance which were thoroughly

71. S.M., Para-127.
72. Ibid., Para-130.
73. S.K., Jullundur, 1832. Paras 197-98.
understood and preserved. A father, who contracted alliances for his daughters in other villages could not reside with any one of them. In fact, he was not expected to pay a visit to his son-in-law's though the latter might come and live with the former, and become an adopted son. The son-in-law might succeed to the property in default of a male issue, even in preference to blood relations, but only on taking his residence in the village. Unless he fulfilled this condition, he would inherit nothing. The customary law restricted the widows to a life tenure, and prevented them from alienating their titles. In many tribes a childless male proprietor could not alienate to the prejudice of next heirs without their consent. The clannish feelings thus strengthened by social customs further united the village communities, and contributed to their continuing to remain so.

The Panchayat or native juries, also played a big role in the preservation of community feeling of the village brotherhood. The affairs concerning the economy of each village were always conducted by a Panchayat — an openly elected committee of five or more members. The villages were quite familiar with the procedures of the Panchayat as well as the rules and antecedents which governed its decisions. Small disputes of

74. Ibid., Paras 199-200.
civil nature were also decided by this committee of elders. The
decisions of the village council (both a developmental and
judicial agency under the Sikh rulers) on the local issues of
social, economic, religious and judicial affairs were final.

The villages in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts were
thus, not inhabited by a certain number of ryots, each unconnected
with the other, but by a number of persons of common descent
forming one large brotherhood with its own headman and accustomed
to joint action and mutual support. The Panjab system was a
truly village system. The village communities suffered from
poverty but they might have had worse fortunes than this, even
when less heavily taxed, had they been disunited among
themselves.

Briefly put, such were, then, the rustic village
communities of this Doab. They thrived under a heavy yoke, and
exhibited commendable firmness, rigour and industry. Individual
members had the welfare of the brotherhood at heart. They
looked upon the rights as sacred, and their dealings among
themselves, were characterised with a fair degree of generosity
and justice.

The Sikh revenue system prevalent in the Jullundur Doab
till 1846, was, as elsewhere, in essentials that of the Mughals

79. S.M., Para-129.
who had derived it from the previous Muhammadan and Hindu rulers. From 1806 to 1830, Dewan Mohkam Chand and his son Moti Ram were Nasims (Governors) of this Doab and by virtue of the authority vested in them by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they exercised Revenue and Criminal Jurisdiction over the Doab. They had tried to fix money assessments, but had failed. They found that people could not be induced to accept it as they had no experience of any other mode of paying the land revenue than the hatai (division of produce) or kanout (appraisal of standing crop). In the year 1831 Sheikh Gholam Mohi-ud-din became Nasim in place of Moti Ram. His rule of a little more than a year was very oppressive and unpopular. It was soon realized that the presence of an able and honest man was the need of the hour, for the number of Khalsa or Government villages had been augmented. A regular assessment of these villages was desirable to better the agricultural prospects of the Doab. A better man than Missar Rup Lal could not have been chosen, so Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed him the Nasim of the Jullundur Doab in 1832 A.D. Missar Rup Lal governed the province with equity and moderation for the next eight years till 1839 A.D. He was very wealthy, and hence, free from any powerful inducement to disregard the interests of the people. It was said of him that he refused even the smallest offering.

which the popular custom prescribed as 'due to a superior' and so his name began to be almost universally revered in the Districts of the Jullundur Doab. The first act of Missar Rup Lal was to reassess all the Khalsa villages and to fix the land revenue on the basis of the documents of Devan Mokham Chand's time which were procurable and on the information provided by old kardars and intelligent residents. The system of collection agreed to under his settlement was either batai or kankut but the period of his leases varied. They were generally for one year but if the assessments worked well, they were allowed to run on. In the event of their being proved too high or too low, they were occasionally revised. He also allowed his kardars discretion to grant total remission for a temporary period or to shift part of the burden from one estate to another which would be better able to bear it, provided the full amount of collections, entrusted to the kardars were made good within the year. In samvat 1890 (1833/34 A.D.) a great famine desolated these provinces. In consequence of the misery caused by that fearful visitation, together with the exaction of his predecessor, the country had become a perfect wilderness and could collect only six lakh rupees in the first year, but gradually the collections picked up and increased to twelve lakh rupees. On the whole Missar's assessment was fairly

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86. S.R., Jullundur, 1852. Para-68.
light and reasonable.

Missar Rup Lal's assessment proved very beneficial. It led to the prompt collections of the balances from all the baronies or talukas in Jullundur Doab, which were managed by him; the rest being held in jagir. The comparative study of the returns of Missar Rup Lal and Sheikh Khud-dina shows, that the former's highest assessment was Rs. 11,93,748 and of latter's Rs. 12,66,774. Rup Lal thus, treated the Khalsa 89 villages with great leniency and made them prosperous. In 1839 A.D., a few months after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din again received the charge of the Doab. Sheikh's first step was to enhance Rup Lal's assessment by twenty five percent but that was not all, He would not adhere even to this enhanced revenue. If the crops looked fine, an arbitrary amount was assessed on them, and no limit was placed as to the sum leviable from any village. Villages 90 were now given to the highest bidder.

Sheikh's mode of collection was either the batal or the division of the garnered grain, or kankut i.e., the appraisal of the standing crop. Any money revenue which was of course a rare thing was based on the half produce estimate. Normally


the state claimed from one-third to two-fifth of the crop, but for land with good natural advantages as much as one half was taken, and these recognised rates could only be reduced by the villagers by bribing the appraising officer. The demand was increased by the levy of numerous cesses. Practically no margin was left for rent, and cultivators of all classes were generally treated alike, though the services of a few leading men in each village were secured by cash allowances or grants of land, or by a percentage of the rulers' share of produce or lower revenue rates on the fields they cultivated.

The primary object in the mind of the Sikh financier who could undertake to collect the land revenue was to extract the utmost from the land. Experience had shown that the occupant of the land, whatever his rights, could easily give to the State half the gross produce without ruining himself or impairing his resources for cultivation. This was the proportion, the Sikhs had resolved to demand. The justice or expediency of such a demand was another matter. It was possible to collect even more than one-half and so one-half by the Sikh Government was regarded as an act of grace. When only for a brief time did the Sikh Government demand less than this, it


94. S.R., Jullundur, 1832. Para-149.
did not collect more than one-half for fear that vitality of the agricultural community would be sapped.

Apparently the object of Sikh officials was to enrich themselves and their dependents without any regard to the interest of the people whom they literally plundered. They also resorted to the malpractice of pocketing a considerable part of the Government revenue before furnishing accounts to the authorities at Lahore.

With the passage of time the high-born tribes in the Jullundur District were gradually supplanted by humbler but more industrious races, as owners of the land. The Rajputs and Muslims of pure descent, such as Sayuds and others, who in earlier times held the greater part of this Doab, were replaced by bodies of steady cultivators who started, as it were, taking root in the soil. When the difficulties and misfortunes threatened, the cultivators were forced to discharge the fiscal liabilities of the estate, and then they had merely to pay some small sum to the proprietor, as tributary recognition of manorial rights and become the masters of the land. The example of the Pathans of the village Dogri in Jullundur District illustrates what happened during the Sikh rule of the Doab. They were taluqdars of the Mughal times, and continuously

95. Ibid., Para-157.
had held this rank and, like the talukdars of Hindustan, had succeeded in suppressing the village communities, either to the level of servants of the Government or of revenue farmers or as feudal jagirdars. But during the Sikh times they had increasingly sold their manorial rights to the cultivators and became enfeoffed with them.

When the British occupied the Doab Districts therefore, the talukdars in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur were those who had yielded to the communities and not the ones who had forced the communities to yield to them. The talukdars of Jullundur were the parties who had for a long time done nothing except for boasting of empty titles and lamenting over lost rights, and received nothing except malikanah dues. The cultivators were the parties who had tilled the land, managed the estates, and paid the revenue for many years. The outcome of this gradual process was that cultivators became proprietors as the Sikh regime pressed severely on the landlords, in part evaded their own burdens by saddling them on the cultivators. Consequently the landlords lost ground in the same proportion, as the cultivators gained it. Still old proprietors were looked upon as lords of the land. The effect of the Sikh rule consequently had been to obliterate or reduce the distinction between the proprietor and the cultivating tenant. The tendency was rather to abandon

100. Ibid., Para-235.
101. Ibid., Para-238.
rights—symbols more of misery than of benefit—than to contend for their exact definition and enjoyment. The inheritors of estates and the subsequent squatters, the varis and the tenant were placed at the same miserable level. Under the Sikh rule, the principle was to exact a heavy revenue, and to ignore all distinctions of right in levying it. Every occupant of the land whether called varis or malik or hall (ploughman) or tenant, or anything else was treated at par for revenue assessment purposes.

Now, if the situation then prevalent is reviewed in this light, it appears that the Sikhs, at least in practice, disregarded proprietary right and that with them ownership was nothing more than an empty name and shadow, because the idea of malkee or proprietorship was theoretically recognized to exist. It can be argued that since the cultivator got one-half of the produce to sustain himself and his family and also carry on the cultivation, and since the remaining one-half which was due to the proprietor, being the owner, was taken away by the State, nothing was left for the proprietor. If he were the proprietor-cum-cultivator, he used to get his half share as cultivator, but nothing as proprietor. Under these circumstances, the proprietary rights degenerated into mere right of occupancy to which no tangible value could be attached.

103. Ibid., pp. 707-708.
In the Jullundur District, among the agriculturists, the majority was of peasant proprietors who cultivated their own land. There were 66,511 proprietors, and 38,589 non-proprietary cultivators. Of the latter 16,264 possessed the right of hereditary occupancy. Out of the whole body, only 277 were not cultivating, and these were chiefly the residents of the city of Jullundur. Jullundur District was, thus eminently a district of peasant proprietors in which each peasant proprietor, on an average, owned 12.5 acres of land, and paid 19.8.2 as yearly revenue. Almost all of them cultivated the land, or were immediately concerned with agriculture. In most cases, no party other than the occupants, claimed any proprietary title. These cultivating communities paid as much as the tenants-at-will, and if the portion of the estate failed, the kardar acted very much as if he had been the proprietor and immediately took over the management of the estate. However, as long as the community paid all their taxes and kept up their estate in a high state of cultivation, he would interfere, and left them to their own internal government. He would, rather assist them in preserving their organisation by helping them to adjust their shares and in several other ways.

106. Ibid., Paras 43-44.


But at these estates, the proprietor, whenever he was one among the party, was allowed to accompany the tax collectors when they went to their rounds, and after the Government's demand had been satisfied, he could collect a paltry seerana which was a certain number of seers per munda. A non-resident malik was almost a non-entity. He was an absentee, had no influence, no responsibility, and no power to interfere in the management of the estate which, indeed, he could scarcely call his own. He was not expected to pay revenue if he resided away from the village for the Sikhs always realised their revenue under the kannut or batal system directly from the cultivator. The proprietor would only collect something on his private account. In actual practice, the cultivator, after contributing all he could spare for the state could not afford to pay him much. Moreover, it was the cultivator who bore all the burdens normally expected to be borne by the owner. It was he who withstood the incessant drain of presents, cesses, and extra-collections, bribed the kunes and chaudhries and fed the hungry retainers of the rapacious kardars. The proprietors held themselves aloof, never faced the above mentioned troubles and were glad to vegetate in an obscurity which, at least, gave them immunity from troubles.

The severity of Sikh land Revenue system particularly impinged heavily on landowning tribes and ruling families whose 113 influence the Sikhs wished to diminish. But elsewhere in estates where the Government's demand was rather moderate, the proprietors, who were generally chaudhriyas or muqaddamis, could assert their rights. They, on their part, liked to do so because it was worth doing so. If the collections there were in kind, the Government would still realize the land revenue directly from the cultivator, but the proprietor would guarantee a number of things. He would hold himself responsible for the continued cultivation of the land already under cultivation and if things went wrong he would arrange for the cultivation of the waste land. He would undertake to replace new cultivators for those who would run away from their lands. At the time of collection, sometimes money commutation would be affected for the future and in such cases, the proprietor would himself engage for the payment of the land revenue. Generally speaking, however, he would allow the cultivators carry the responsibility of paying the land revenue and content himself with the receipt of malikanas, more to assert his title to the land than for what it fetched him. That was because in cases where he would himself undertake to pay the land revenue to the Government, he would expose himself to one serious risk. If the proprietor, having accepted one jama was outbid by someone

else who would undertake to pay more to the State, he would either have to take up the highest bid or else resign in favour of the stranger, and then it would be very uncertain whether he would ever afterwards regain his ownership of the estate.

The practice of Missar Rup Lal clearly illustrates the system which recognized two parties in an estate, namely, the malkunar in possession, and the proprietor. In some of his naitae or patents produced before the arrival of the British Officials in 1846, it was clearly laid down that while the engagements had been undertaken with the cultivators, the cultivators besides the Government dues, also owed an additional amount to the proprietors. He fixed moderate jamaiz and fixed them directly with the cultivators to encourage them to continue on their lands. His policy succeeded in achieving its object. The proprietors broke malkana and had to forgo the privilege of dealing with the government. Rup Lal, perhaps, thought that the cultivators were the fittest persons to be engaged for his collection of the land revenue. It is worth-noting that when the proprietors appealed to Lahore Darbar against Rup Lal’s practice, a warrant was issued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh which declared that where certain parties...

115. Ibid., Para-170.
(cultivators) had been admitted to engage to the exclusion of certain other parties (proprietors) who also claimed their right to engage, the engagements concluded with the former should be cancelled. From the tone and tenor of these and other public documents, it becomes clear that the Sikh rulers did not look upon private property as a creation of their Government but as an original abstract right recognised by their predecessors who controlled the state power and subject to neither abolition nor removal by political changes. Authenticated deeds of sale and other transfers were not regarded as obsolete nullities applicable to only such a system that passed away with the Government from which it sprang, but as instruments of immutable validity.

An important evidence to prove a proprietor's claim on land on the eve of British occupation of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur was the engraved name of the founder on the bricks and stones inside the well watering that tract of land. In case of disputes that decided the whole question completely. The evidence of name inscribed was rightly looked upon as the best source of the claim on land as it indicated the continuous and undisputed claim for a number of generations. In a country where much depended on an artificial irrigation, the sinking of a well was the first attribute of a proprietor, and its

119. Ibid., Para-177. S.M. Para-110.
120. Ibid., Paras-203 & 4.
existence was the best proof of his title. So, the proprietors were reluctant to allow cultivators to sink a well. But several communities of cultivators noticed the weakening of the landlord's hold on the estate, hastened to build wells and thereby, found a proprietary claim in spite of the landlord.

In 1846, the distinction between the cultivator and the proprietor was keenly appreciated in the Jullundur Doab. The right of occupancy, apart from proprietary right, was unknown. The Government had partially recognised it, but the people had not. However long a patched land might have been occupied, the proprietor could resume it without ceremony at his pleasure and the cultivator had to surrender without offering any resistance. Of course, that was seldom done for reasons already given.

In actual practice, however, the Sikh rule in the Jullundur Doab was not an unmixed evil and the position of the agriculturist was not wholly pitiable. The Sikhs no doubt taxed oppressively and vexatiously but only to a limit. Their tyranny was utilitarian. They would extract the maximum revenue and having done that, would generally abstain from wanton cruelty. The shaudhris of the different leading families or tribes who were the traditional leaders and who performed the duties of village council in maintaining the village brotherhood and communal ties, constituted a useful agency at the time of the

121. S.M., Para-113.
British becoming the Sovereign of the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts. The institution had its origins in the particular social system. When a village consisted of a number of loosely aggregated cultivating occupants, it was natural that people should have recognised some one of their members to be their headman. Possibly, these men who represented the leaders of the original settlers were the trustees of the community and performed useful functions. They decided local disputes, allotted lands when cultivation was extended and performed several other useful duties. Once the chaudhris started paying the revenue to the ruler, they held themselves responsible not only for the payment but for the punctual payment of the state dues. A certain measure of State authority was thus vested in the chaudhris and that added to their dignity and authority.

The dignity of these chaudhris increased further still under the Sikh rule. They acted as the agency for collection of land revenue which made a major source of income for the Sikh rulers. The rigour of the Sikh rule was considerably relaxed then and they soon became partners in the exercise of the political power of the Sikh rulers. Under the administrative system finally adopted by the Sikhs, the chaudhris became the government officials incharge of a circle of villages locally denominated as tawnah or taluka. Under each one of them were one or two muqaddams in each village. The chaudhris aided the Government in realizing the revenues in their respective

division, and the muoaddams of their villages. The privileges enjoyed by these parties included the lowering of Government demand, generally from one-half to two-fifths (puohdoo), or one-third (tibara) or even to one-fourth on the lands and estates held by them. Various grants of land were also bestowed upon them under the titles choydhryut, muoaddam, etc. Gratuities were given to them in cash or in kind under the general denomination of "enan." Soon the position of chauhdries and muoaddans became similar to the parwanah canoonos who held their office upon hereditary tenure and were the official repositories of fiscal records.

Under the muoaddam in the village were lumberdare. The office of the lumberdar was hotly contested among the village communities as the emoluments attached to this office were considerable. The Sikh rulers entrusted the lumberdari of a village to men of influence belonging to that village. The lumberdare were, invariably, persons of much consequence and were often rewarded by land grants for the services rendered by them. In the Jullundur District, the lumberdare under the Sikh rule were a very contented lot as they were paid ten percent of the collections. They also had several opportunities of recovering large sums from the communities, under the demand of salba. Lumberdare also could exempt a portion of their own

125. B.R., Jullundur, 1853. Para-152.
126. Ibid., Para-155.
127. Ibid., Para-275.
lands from payment of government dues. Their power was great; and much land unjustly passed into their hands.

Sometimes more than one lumberdar were appointed for a village. The office of lumberdar was hereditary and descended from father to the eldest son. But sometimes and at some places this custom was not followed. For example in the village Bodal, in Tehsil Dasuya, District Hoshiarpur, only one out of the three lumberdars was succeeded by his son during the entire Sikh rule of the district.

The lumberdari of the village was sometimes inherited by a younger son but the elder son would be ignored only on the grounds of incompetence and misconduct. In case of a minor son,


(In the village Alavalpur, four lumberdars were working on four different patties, i.e. Patti Alavalpur, Patti Rasidpur, Patti Lakhman, and Patti Nabipur. The four lumberdars were Kala, Koora, Ahmad Saksh and Kuru).

130. Misl Bandobast Kanooni, Hadbast No. 93, dated 1852, Mauza Bodal, Tehsil Dasuya, District Hoshiarpur (D.C. Hoshiarpur, Revenue, Vernacular Record).

There were three lumberdars, Padha s/o Jagta, Fateh Chand s/o Gulaba Ram, and Hari s/o Khagta. The only lumberdar, Fateh Chand was succeeded by his son Partap Singh and two new incumbents crept in, i.e. Hari Singh s/o Bala and Dhona s/o Bhana. After that Partap Singh and Hari Singh were succeeded by their sons Dharam Singh and Bir Singh respectively. But again a new man came into office named Ram Rakha. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Bir Singh s/o Hari Singh continued and Dharam Singh was succeeded by his son Rattan Singh.
the right of lumberdari was shared between him and a man who acted his sarprasi till he came of age and took over the complete charge himself. If the lumberdar died issueless, the lumberdari was conferred either on his brother or on his nephew. In case of his brothers or nephews was alive, it passed to his nearest relative.

When the British became the masters of the Jullundur Doab in 1846, most of the land in the Doab was held by the jagirdars. No less than 2,337 villages, with total land tax of rupees eighteen lakhs had been given in jagirs, and their revenue was appropriated by the jagirdars. In Hoshiarpur District, 1,086 villages fetching land revenue totalling Rs.6,37,143 were held in jagirs. In the Jullundur District 1,081 of the total of 1,820 villages had been given by the Lahore Kingdom in jagirs to those persons who had been or were rendering service to the Lahore Government.

All the jagirs were, however, not of the same type. As many as five different types of jagirs existed in 1846. First


133. Ibid., Para-14.

134. Ibid., Para-12.
of all were the jagirs of Hill Chiefs. These were hereditary and had generally been in their possession for ages. The chiefs were connected with the people by ties of blood and association. Their ancestors ruled in the hills before the Muhammedan conquests. The important jagirs in the plains of the Doab were held in misaldari or conquest tenures, and were the remnants of old feudal system of the Sikhs. As the Muhammedan power declined, Sikh adventurers, chiefly of the jut caste, left their homes in the mahiba or country north to and around Amritsar crossed river Beas, conquered the Jullundur Doab and parcelled it out among themselves and their followers. This was done to support their armed retainers, principally troopers, for a footman appeared to them as a man of little consequence. That was immediately after the death of Adina Beg in 1759. With the strong hand of Adina Beg disappearing from the Doab, as many as twenty Sikh Sardars had acquired estates in the Doab in 1759. With the strong hand of Adina Beg disappearing from the Doab, as many as twenty Sikh Sardars had acquired estates in the Doab in 1759 and having parcelled it out among themselves further sub-divided the territories among their followers. This was to establish in the Doab what

135. Ibid., Para-54.
136. Ibid., Para-55.
the historians have rightly described as the Sikh form of the feudal system. The Sardars heading the confederacies had under them minor chiefs, and these again had subordinates down to the level of common soldiers.

These Sikh confederacies, once they were the masters of the Doab, started attacking each other and the stronger chiefs started swallowing the possessions of the weaker ones. When Ranjit Singh became the master of the Doab in 1806 he felt that it was impolitic to deprive the powerful Sikh Chiefs of the revenue they had enjoyed and the powers they had exercised within their own estates even though he had converted them from his equals into his vassals. He, therefore, contented himself by making their tenure conditional to furnishing contingents of horsemen to reinforce his armies in the times of war. He did that in the hope that these troops would supplement his trained foot soldiers who were the real backbone of his war machinery.

The less powerful chiefs suffered more at his hands. Their estates were declared to have lapsed to the Khalsa as their original owners had died off. Every essential attribute of sovereignty of these jagirdars, subsequently described by

138. S.R., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II (Historical), Para-16.
139. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), NAI, Prodg. No. 2443, dated 31st December, 1847, John Lawrence, Commissioner and Superintendent, Trans-Sutlej States, to Lt. Col. Henry Lawrence, Agent to Governor-General, No. 690, dated 28th November, 1846, Para-55.
British Administrators as conquerors, jagirdars, was now lost to them. All that was left to them was the enjoyment of the public revenue of a portion of the original conquests of their forefathers. They were now no more than feudal barons of the Lahore Government who were required either to contribute money to their sovereign, the Lahore Government, or to render military service. Ranjit Singh actually succeeded in securing from the chiefs a number of men for his army and in some cases personal service in lieu of the portion of their estates allowed to be retained by them.

The third important class of jagirdars was the priestly class of the Sikhs. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had alienated a number of villages to Bedis and Sodhis of the Jullundur Doab. They were the descendants of the spiritual leaders of the Sikhs—Guru Nanak and Guru Ram Dass. On the eve of the annexation of the Jullundur Doab, Baba Bikram Singh of Una was the most important Bedi of the Doab and Guru Sadhu Singh of Kartarpur, the most important Sodhi. The former had several strong forts.


143. S.R., Jullundur, 1892, Chapter II. (Historical), Para-27.


where he would always keep large number of armed men. Jagirs granted by the Lahore Kingdom to the priestly class were simply due to the religious sanctity attached to them. This class of jagirdars was held in high esteem by the Sikh Chiefs, even before the rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to power. It is said that on one occasion, the Patiala forces refused to fight against Baba Sahib Singh, the father of Baba Bikram Singh, out of respect for his saintly character. Even Maharaja Ranjit Singh respected him so much that he took pahul from him. Later on, Baba Sahib Singh Bedi also performed the coronation of the Maharaja, and was treated by the Maharaja as his religious guide. Out of regard, respect and religious sanctity, the Maharaja conferred upon him a jagir of seventy two villages near Una. Baba Sahib Singh was also an arbitrator in a land dispute between Sardar Gurdit Singh of Santokbgarh and Raja Umed Singh of Jaswan, and performed the function so nicely that he was granted the taluka of Una for this trouble by Raja Umed Singh, and the rich village of Kulgraon by Raja Gurdit Singh. In this manner Bedi Sahib Singh had, soon, become a great and powerful jagirdar of the Jullundur Doab. Maharaja


Ranjit Singh subsequently, conferred on him one additional jagir of Udhowali and Gujranwala to further add to his increasing 150 possessions.

Sadi Sahib Singh was held in great esteem by the Maharaja of Patiala, Sahib Singh, who in a correspondence referred to him as "Baba Sahib Bedi Sahib Singh Ji." For his accompanying the Maharaja on his several expeditions, Baba Sahib Singh Bedi was generously rewarded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh from time to time with certain proportionate amounts of the spoils which fell to him as victor. The Maharaja felt that his expeditions succeeded to a great extent on account of the presence of that zealous and holy man in his camp. After the death of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi in 1834, his son, Bedi Bikram Singh began to be looked upon as the preceptor of the Lahore Royal Family. At the time of British take over the Jullundur Doab, they found Bedi Bikram Singh holding jagirs worth Rs. 86,813/- a year.

Another Guru, Sadhu Singh Sodhi of Kartarpur was also held in high esteem by all the Sikh rulers. His ancestor Dhir Mal, an ambitious man, had seized lands worth Rs. 75,000/- per annum in Jullundur Doab. Guru Sadhu Singh held this property during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh due to his priestly character. Guru Sadhu Singh had been on good terms

150. Loc. cit.
151. Loc. cit.
153. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), NAI, Prodg. No. 2443, dated 31st December, 1847, John Lawrence, Commissioner and Superintendent, Trans-Sutlej States, to Lt. Col. Henery Lawrence Agent to Governor General, No. 690, dated 28th November, 1846.
with the Chiefs of Cis-Sutlej States and had received substantial jagirs and other presents from the Rajas of Patiala, Jind and Nabha. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had further presented houses and gardens attached to the Baoli Sahib in Lahore city to the Kartarpur Guru which yielded a handsome revenue to him. Shops in the Dabbi Bazar at Lahore were also made over to the Guru of Kartarpur to assist him in maintaining the Baoli in proper trim. In 1845-46 when Jullundur Doab was taken over by the British Government, Guru Sadhu Singh's jagir lands were estimated at Rs.65,000/- per annum.

The Sodhis of Anandpur Sahib were treated with even greater respect than the Bedis of Una and the Sodhis of Kartarpur, possibly because they were looked upon as the direct descendants of the Sodhi Gurus. To the Sikh Chiefs, it was always an honour to have the Anandpur Sodhis going with them on an expedition. The members of this family were constantly out of Anandpur accompanying such expeditions.

The fourth category of jagirs during the reign of Sikh rulers was the pay or service jagirs which were granted not only for the services rendered in the army but also for other types of services and they had to pay masarana to the Lahore

155. Ibid., Page-299.
156. Jagir Register No. 2, Jullundur, Supplement to Statement No.2, New Jagirs, dated 11th September, 1844. Case No. 44 (D.C. Jullundur Revenue Record) (There were also similar cases of Ala Singh, Karam Rai etc., Cases No. 48, 54, 45).
Ruler. A typical example of many such jagirs in the Jullundur
District was the grant of jagir of village, Attali in Jullundur
nazarana worth Rs.1,700/- to Sher Ali for rendering useful
services.

The Sikh rulers had also granted jagirs in the Jullundur
District in lieu of pay or wages to incumbents who were still
serving the Lahore Government. The jagirdars, under this head
did not supply gowara nor did they pay any nazarana to the
ruler. A sanad of Raja Sher Singh dated samvat 1898 or 1841/42
A.D. tells us about the grant of village Ghaol in Tanda worth
Rs.500/- per annum in lieu of pay.

The jagir of village Shojpur in Tanda was granted to
Khasan Singh, who was on the pay roll of Lahore Kingdom. He
obtained this village in samvat 1902 or 1845-46 A.D. on a sanad
granted by Maharaja Dalip Singh. H. Van Starrt, Deputy
Commissioner, Jullundur, while giving remarks on this case
wrote:- "This village was in pay for service rendered at Lahore
and is not a jagir." This jagir was valued at Rs.450/- per annum

157. Jagir Register No. 1, Jullundur, Statement No. 1 & 2 of
New Jagirs, B.D., Case No.-9. (D.C. Jullundur, Revenue
Record).

158. Jagir Register, Jullundur No. 3, dated 21st September,
1846 jagirs of Bedis, Sodhis and Brahmins, Case No. 12
(D.C. Jullundur Revenue Record).
and had no liability attached to it.

Another type of jagir was of dharmaarth. Such jagirs were very large in number. Dharmaarth meant the assignment of jagir for the sake of religious purposes. The Sikh rulers assigned dharmaarth jagirs to religious places and to religious personages like sants and mahants and to those who were devoted to the performance of religious functions and duties. Under the category of 'Charitable Grants to Religious Places' fell the assignments to gurudwaras, temples, thakurdwaras, dharmaasalas and takvisas. The Gurudwaras in the Jullundur Doab were substitutes for sarais and consequently received help not only from the rulers but from the people also. To cite only one example, there was one udasi gurudwara at Bahadurgarh in District


There are many more cases of these types.

Jagir was granted by a sanad by Maharaja Sher Singh, dated gant 1898 or 1841-42 A.D. to Fateh Singh goorchah in lieu of pay.

Jagir Register No. 1, Jullundur, New Jagirs, M.D., Statement No. 2, Case No. 2 (D.C. Jullundur Vernacular Revenue Record).

Another jagir worth Rs.3,000/- of the same type was bestowed to Khem Singh by Maharaja Dalip Singh in gant 1902 or 1845-46 A.D. in lieu of payment.


Hoshiarpur. This *gurudwara* was situated at a beautiful spot and enclosed in a magnificent mango grove on the banks of a rivulet. This *gurudwara* was assigned lands by Maharaja Ranjit Singh as well as by the public. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had granted the village of Chuhal by a *sanad* in *sambat* 1890 or 1855 A.D. in lieu of cash and grain to the amount of Rs.400/- per annum which the institution received from the state. The total amount of the income derived from the lands to this important *gurudwara* was Rs.1,058-15-0. The *sambat* of that *gurudwara* was Gursukh Dass.

An interesting feature of the jagirs to charitable institutions was that the grantor would make a special appeal in the deed that the grantee be not troubled. A deed of gift granted by Sardar Jawahar Singh dated *sambat* 1869 or 1812-13 A.D. to Bhai Bhag Singh reads thus.

"I have released the village of Hameedpoor to Bhai Bhag Singh for the support of the Dharamsala. Be careful that the grantee is not molested in the above grant and that I have also released to the said grantee Baba Bhag Singh, a further possession of 20 guneens of land in the village of Gadran and that he be allowed to collect the revenue of this grant at every *jumal* for the support of the dharamsala."

The charitable institution mentioned in the grant had a *thakurdwara*, a room for the public reading of the *Granth*,

travellers' house (dharana) and a few other buildings besides the mango orchard. The institution receiving the dharannath was thus semi-religious and semi-charitable in character. Another example of a similar grant was that of half of the village Jagatpur in the Phillor pargana, District Jullundur as jagir. This was granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Harsaran Dass, an Udasi Mahant, for the support of a dharana. A samad sealed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in samvat 1661884 or 1827-28 A.D. ran thus:

"This half of the village of Jagatpoor has always been given in charity to Harsaran Mahant, Phugwarawala, let it not be interfered."

Jagirs for support of religious institutions were sometimes assigned by individuals and sometimes in combination by like-minded people. For example, in village Chamyalari pargana Jullundur, Talwars, the sarindars had granted 3 Chusaans of land to one Fakir named Hussain Shah for the support of the takvia. This takvia, situated on the Jullundur-Tanda road,


provided a comfortable shelter to the travellers.

Sometimes charitable grants or dharamarths were given to religious personages rather than to the institutions. These personages were fakirs, saints, mahants and sometimes Brahmans. A typical instance of such jagirs was that of mauza Chandeen in Jullundur worth Rs. 450 per annum granted in 1809 as jagir to Bhai Prem Singh Sadh and confirmed to him by a sanad granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in sambat 1881 or 1824/25 A.D. It bore the seal of Maharaja and was worded as follows:-

"Be it known that I have granted estate to Bhai for the expenses of providing Fakirs with foods and Ca Ca."

The rulers and the ruled had tremendous reverence for religious personages and sometimes a change was made in the person of the grantee depending on the then opinion of the ruler on the character of the man to whom the State was to extend its patronage. For example, in 1815-16 a grant of village Ramgarh in parganah Kahon had been assigned to Megh Chand and Madho Dass by Jasara Singh for Rs. 200/-. In the year 1833-34 Maharaja Ranjit Singh resumed the share of Madho Dass and assigned it to Devi Shah, a Brahmin of Jodhli. Ranjit Singh’s sanad issued to Missar Rup Lal was as follows:-


"You are now informed that mausah Ram Garh which has always been held free by Megh Ram and Bhagat Devee Dass, is to be given to them as follows: The share which under the rule of Dewan Mohum Chand and Motsee Ram was held by Megh Raj is to be given to him, and the share which Devee Dass is in possession be given up to him (Devee Dass). In this fail not."

Sometimes dharamartha jagirs were granted for wishing well of the Maharaja. A jagir yielding Rs. 500 per annum, the village of Thunera in Rahon parganah, was granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the year 1835-36 to Pandit Sheo Ram for his praying for the health of the Maharaja. A similar jagir was assigned comprising half the mausa of Ittwandi in Tanda and yielding Rs. 400/- was awarded to Baba Mohan Singh Bedi.

Udasi Pakira were special favourites of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who granted them many jagirs in different parganah of the Jullundur District. One of these was assigned in dharamartha in saabat 1865 or 1799/1800 A.D. yielding Rs. 2,000 per annum to Mahant Sangat Singh in the village of Baluki and one-half of mausa Sharakpur in parganah Nakodar.

Another dharamartha of village Khurd in Rahon yielding Rs.380/- annually was assigned by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1811/12 A.D. to Bhai Mohan Singh, who was Rajput by Caste but a granthi by profession. He was succeeded by his son Swroop Singh.

Another grant of village Daryapur, in Jullundur parganah worth

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171. Ibid., Case No. 54.
172. Ibid., Case No. 68.
173. Ibid., Case No. 70.
174. Ibid., Case No. 59.
Rs. 500/- was granted to Sahib Singh by Nao Nihal Singh and Maharaja Kharrak Singh in 1859-40 A.D. The Sikh rulers assigned charitable jagirs or "asias" to "ardasias" who prayed for their success. One grant of such type was made to Bhai Jodh Singh "ardasia" in 1835-36 A.D. He was given half the "mausa" of Awan in Phillor "nawanah" which yielded him Rs. 35/- per annum in jagir.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's example of granting jagirs in "dharmaarth" was followed by his successors, perhaps even on a larger scale. A charitable grant was made by Sher Singh in 1898 or 1841-42 A.D. to Kanwar Singh Sadh of a village of Dasypur in Tanda which fetched him Rs. 50/- per annum. Another grant was made by him on the same day to Harkishan Dass Udasi of half of "mausa" of Suchi Fstd in Jullundur which fetched Rs. 400/- per annum.

Apart from Udasis and Brahmans, jagirs were granted to Sayudes as "dharmaarth". In the Jullundur District half the "mausa" of Islamapur Chookti fetching Rs. 350/- per annum was granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Sayud Nathu Shah in jagir in 1829/30 A.D.

175. Ibid., Case No. 36.
176. Ardasias used to say prayers in the Gurdwaras.
177. Jagir Register, Jullundur, No. III, dated 21st September, 1846, Jagirs of Bedis, Sodhis and Brahmans, Case No. 43.
178. Ibid., Case No. 18.
179. Ibid., Case No. 39.
180. A priestly class among Mohammedans.
Bharamarthe were also granted to the persons, doing religious service in gurudwaras or in temples. In the case of temples one charitable nahi of village Soonga Khurd in the Phillor pargannah yielding Rs. 720/- per annum was granted in 1840-41 by Raja Sher Singh to a Brahmin named Ram Saran Dass, who was chariali (bell ringer) by profession.

Maharaja Dalip Singh granted village Kamalpur in Nakodar pargannah, fetching Rs. 360/- per annum to Makhan Singh granthi of Amritsar in the samvat 1902 or 1845-46 A.D. It should be clear from the above account that jagirdars constituted an important element in the social set up of the Jullundur Doab on the eve of the British occupation of the area in 1846. Jagirdars were a powerful community both financially as well as politically. Perhaps what added to the strength of the jagirdars was that they could do whatever they liked with their jagirs. They sold their jagirs and they gave them in dowry when they felt like doing so. The jagirs had actually become heritable and in most cases they were inherited by the

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182. Chariali means a bell ringer in Hindu Temple.


184. Granthis were those persons who recited the sacred book of the Sikhs "Guru Granth Sahib" to public in the Gurudwaras.

sons, even when they were not serving the Lahore Government.

The sale of jagirs provoked no interference from the State, as would be clear from the case of one jagir of dharamarth granted to two persons namely Hakim Singh and Sangat Singh by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the year 1815-16 A.D. He granted mausa Siawal in Jullundur yielding Rs. 300/- per annum in jagir to the two incumbents, each getting half the share. Sangat Singh died and his grandsons, Kishan Singh and Charan Singh sold the half share inherited by them to Barbara Singh for Rs. 1,400/-. Deed of sale (habnana) for the 186 half mausa siawal was written as follows:-

"We have sold the 1/2 share of the above mausa to Barbara Singh the father of Prem Singh in sambat 1896 or 1839-40 A.D."

The Sikh rulers avoided any interference in the sale of this half mausa, though the jagir tenure in which it was held was dharamarth for performing religious duties and Barbara Singh did not perform any such duty. Sometimes even bequest (hikana) of the jagirs was made by incumbents as would be clear from the case of four villages, Behlol, Basidpur, Maksuri, Chiki in the Sahon parganah fetching Rs. 1,200/- per annum and given in dharamarth to Sodhi Karam Singh. When Karam Singh died, he was survived by three sons and two widows, One widow, Raj Kaur left her share by way of hiba to Faujdar Singh, her grandson. The

186. Jagir Register, Jullundur No. 1, Statement No. 1, N.D., Case No. 10. (B.C. Jullundur, Revenue Records).
"The share of my husband's property which was received by me, viz. one slave girl and 9 villages situated near Rahon, I (being of sound mind) have given to my grandson Faujdar Singh in addition to a dwelling house and a store house; dated samvat 1888 or 1831-32 A.D."

This hibanaana (bequest) by Raj Kaur was made during her lifetime. Strictly speaking she could not transfer this hereditary right because the benefits accruing to her from it were meant only for her own life-span yet the Lahore Government did not interfere in the execution of her will.

The case of Raj Kaur was not an isolated one. One Ram Singh was granted mauza Puridian in jagir in Tanda yielding Rs. 6,000/- per annum. He was succeeded by his son Bahadur Singh who married Ram Kaur from whom he had one daughter named Karam Kaur. After the death of Bahadur Singh, his widow Ram Kaur, by way of bequest, dated samvat 1883 (1826-27 A.D.) gave away the said mauza to her daughter, Karam Kaur, in dowry on the occasion of her marriage with Shola Nath. Again there was not even the slightest interference from the Sikh rulers in the execution of the deed.

Jagirdars were the lords of their jagirs with the Lahore Darbar exercising no check on them. They were financially well
off and extorted from the cultivators one-half of the gross produce on all crops which were capable of division just as the Lahore Government did from the cultivators tilling the Khalsa lands. From the crops which were not divided, they collected the revenue at the following rates:

- Sugarcane: Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 per acre.
- Cotton: Rs. 3.5 to Rs. 4.5 per acre.
- Popy and Tabasco: Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per acre.

Apart from these exorbitant collections, they took annual nazarat, and further compelled the cultivators to pay a moiety of all fines levied by the Government and supply gratuitous labour to the utmost of their capabilities. They also exacted fodder for their cattle. Presents from the cultivators on every birth, marriage and festive occasions in the family of jagirdar was a regular feature. Even the non-cultivating classes residing in the jagir estates were not spared. The jagirdar would make them pay some sort of a house tax. Thus both the cultivating and the non-cultivating classes were victims of the rapacity of the jagirdars who seldom missed the opportunity of collecting nazarat, taxes, and fines, and received presents and demanded free labour. Ruling in the name of the Sikh Government, they realised all its exactions, and exercised all its powers. Their estates consequently looked like numerous mini-states functioning within the State.

The avaricious attitude of the jagirdars towards the village communities had reduced the masses in the Jullundur Doab to a piteous state. The back-breaking exactions and collections made by jagirdars left them in an utterly helpless state. Even the Cis-Sutlej people had a better lot than these Jullundur Doab people. In Cis-Sutlej-States, the population was scanty, and the soil so poor that it could hardly pay any rent or revenue, yet the people flourished because their labour was well rewarded. Jullundur Doab was densely populated and had a fertile soil, but the people were very poor because of the high rent and revenue collected from them by the jagirdars.

No wonder then that on the eve of the British occupation of the Jullundur Doab, clashes between the jagirdars and the cultivating classes formed a regular feature of life of the area. A powerful jagirdar grounded his cultivators to dust in his estate. In estates where the power was balanced between the jagirdar and the cultivators, there was bloodshed and violence at every harvest. It was a natural consequence of the baronial powers enjoyed by the jagirdars, non-interference of the Lahore Government and the failure of the Sikh rulers to have ever defined clearly the relative positions and privileges of the jagirdars vis-a-vis the cultivators.

When in 1846, Jullundur Doab came under the British, officials found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. The

191. Ibid., Para-65.
192. Ibid., Para-60.
cultivators, expecting the new Government to be favourably inclined towards them, flooded the British Administration with petitions and forced them to take some immediate decision on the relationship between the jagirdars and the peasants in the new set up. The most vocal among the peasantry were the cultivators of Phillor in the nawanah of Jullundur. They petitioned to John Lawrence, the Commissioner of Jullundur Doab to do something to check the atrocities of the jagirdars and their tyrannical attitude towards them. They suggested that something should be done immediately to protect them against exercise of powers by the jagirdars. It did not take much time for John Lawrence to realize that if the powers of jagirdars were not curtailed, this struggle between the jagirdars and cultivators would continue and compel the cultivators to desert the jagirdar's lands and take refuge in the Khalsa villages. Obviously such a thing in a region where population was dense and soil fertile would have created many troubles for the newly set up British Government. The only possible way to prosperity in the area, John was quick to realize, lay in compelling the jagirdars to tax the cultivators lightly. He, however, knew that the jagirdars were not going to give up their old methods voluntarily, unless threaten with dire consequences for refusing to follow the dictates of the new masters.

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194.
In the social set up that the British had to deal with on becoming the masters of the Jullundur Doab, there prevailed a number of social evils but the one which attracted their immediate attention and that of female infanticide. There were many hundred families in the two Districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur among whom in each generation, only one female child was allowed to remain alive. This was, surely, because the female infanticide was practised almost as a social custom. It was, of course, not prevalent in the Jullundur Doab alone. Among the Rajput tribes residing all over the Panjab, particularly in Rupar and Kharar Tehsils of Ambala District and in some villages of Thaneshwar and Kaithal, it was more or less practised universally.

The Bediês of Ferozepur District, and the Dogars residing on the banks of the Sutlej were equally guilty of following this practice. But it was the Bedis and Sodhis of the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur who practised it on such a colossal scale that, throughout the Panjab, they came to be known as kurt mar or daughter-slayers.

Bedis were Khatries and they held a prominent position in the social set up of the Jullundur Doab though their number here was far exceeded by jats, chamaris and Brahmans. They were two of the many sub-castes or gotras of the Khatriū broadly

195. Foreign Consultations (Pol.) NAI, Prod., No. 185, dated 9th September, 1855, F.B. Melville, Secretary to Chief Commissioner, to J.P. Grant, Offg. Secretary to Government of India, No. 458, dated 8th July, 1855. Para-3.

196. Ibid., Para-1.
split into three broad divisions: **hara-share**, **shar-share** and **dhai-share**. It is difficult to say as to how the Khatri community got split into these three broad divisions but H.B. Edwardes, Deputy Commissioner, Jullundur in his report of 1852 on the female infanticide of this district, gave a very significant and convincing story of how that might have happened.

The story runs like this. Once Emperor Akbar was struck with pity for a Khatri girl who, because of the death of a Khatri officer her husband in a battle, was consigned to a life of widowhood. He resolved to attempt the abolition of the social norm that prohibited second marriage of the Khatri girls. For this purpose he summoned the deputies of the Khatris from every town in the Panjab. The headquarter of Khatris then was at Multan, and the most influential men of the tribe were two brothers, Lalu and Jagdhar who alone, Akbar believed, could successfully guide the community to give up this undesirable custom. These two brothers lent a willing ear to the royal messenger who had gone there to sell the official line of their King; but, they said, they must consult their mother, as this was a matter which concerned women more than men. They went to consult their mother. The old lady said that she would agree to it only on the condition that another husband be first found for her. But the sons enquired of their

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mother what use would a husband of more than eighty be because she herself was eighty at that time. To this she replied that she would demand two husbands of 41 years each. The sons felt abashed and realised how easy it was to suggest an innovation but how difficult to click it. For their pioneering such a departure from the ancient custom, the names of Lalu and Jagdhar became terms of abuse among the Khatris.

Even Emperor Akbar, thus, failed to gain consent to his new approach but his initiative led to further divisions in the Khatri ranks. So far, they were divided into just two divisions, Sarins and Abunja's, but henceforth the number of such divisions increased manifold. This development was a direct consequence of the Khatris' response to Akbar's calling the Khatri to his darbar to discuss the change in one of their social customs of a long standing. Of those who went to the darbar, some Sarins, with an eye on court's favours, promised their unqualified adherence to the change suggested in their social law by Akbar but others reacted with varying degrees of resentment. A few trimmers who wished to argue out the point with the Emperor came to be known as the laberahe of chah ghar. Those who did not wish to appear rude and came to the darbar, but kept silent became ghar Ghar. Those who did not enter the darbar, but waited to hear the news, were described as parsh ghar. All those who had either not come to the darbar or had turned back from it and returned to their homes with faith uncorrupted by the court, became the mass of Abunjals. The last constituted

198. Ibid., Para-55.
the majority of the Panjab Khatris.

The story may be apocryphal but it does carry the popular belief that the common stock of the Panjabi Khatris subsequently split into two broad divisions, Sarins and Shunjais. The Sarins were generally looked upon as superior Khatris, and unlike the Shunjais, had not grouped their sub-castes in three grades of dhai shares, char shares and bara shares. One of the inevitable results of the division of the Khatris into groups was the diversity in marriage ceremonies which in earlier times were uniform for all the Khatris. The Sarins actually did not intermarry with Shunjais, unless they were Bedis or Sodhis.

The female infanticide did not remain confined to the upper classes only. Pride drove the Rajputs and Bedis to commit the crime; poverty drove the others. In the latter cases, the alternative with the parents was either to sacrifice their fortune or the lives of their daughters. They chose female infanticide in preference to beggary.

The practice of female infanticide seems to have first started with the Bedis in the Jullundur doab, or for that matter in the Panjab on account of their priestly pride. The first Bedi known to have practised it was Dharam Chand Bedi, a grandson

199. Loc. cit.

200. Ibid., Para-58.

1st Grade or dhai share included the following castes of Khatris: Khanne, Malhotre, Seth, Kapur.

2nd Grade or char share were: Tondon, Wahi, Mahri, Dhawan, Vij.

3rd Grade for bara share were: Chopra, Talwar, Duggal Bhalle, Vij, Mehta, Kakar, Seri.
of Baba Nanak. He had two sons, Mehr Chand and Manik Chand and one daughter who was engaged to the son of a Khatri whom the Bedis looked upon as belonging to an inferior subcaste of Khatri. It is said that when the marriage party arrived at the house of Dharan Chand, the door was found too narrow to admit the litter on which the boy was being carried, and the riotous attendants, with more than the usual license of the occasion, proceeded to widen it with force. The incensed Bedis, standing by for the reception, sent up their silent prayer that the threshold of that particular Khatri tribe might come to ruin. The ceremonial rites were thus performed amidst ill-feelings. When it was time for the bridegroom and his party to depart, the two sons of Dharan Chand, as per custom, accompanied them to accord them a... 201. Foreign Consultations (Pol.), MAI, Prodg. No. 186, dated 9th September, 1853, Minutes of Judicial Commissioner for Panjab. Para-5.
greatest sins in the *shastras*. But Dharam Chand brushed aside their objection with the remark, that if the Bedis remained true to their faith, and abstained from lies and strong *drink*, providence would reward them with none but male children. He asserted that he alone and none else would carry this crime upon his head.

Dharam Chand's supposed injunction, continued to be followed for three hundred years. They would murder their infant daughters and if any Bedi out of natural feelings of love and attachment did not kill the daughter, he was ex-communicated from the rest and treated as a common sweeper.

The above story, may or may not be true but the fact that it had wide circulation clearly proves that religious pride and horrors of giving a daughter to an inferior caste and not the pecuniary considerations first led the Bedis to take to female infanticide. Perhaps the principle that girls should marry their equals or superiors, and boys their equals or inferiors in rank further strengthened the practice. There were few Khatriis who could be regarded as superior to the descendants of the great Sikh teachers and so they had either to abandon their high pretensions or else get rid of their daughters.

The Bedis stuck to the practice in spite of the fact that


in consequence of having no daughters to give to other Khatri in exchange, they were compelled to adopt the custom of purchasing brides for their sons. The female infanticide was, no doubt, candidly admitted by the Bedis themselves and was a universal practice among them under the Sikh rule.

The general practice, among the Khatri for matrimonial alliances, was that a boy of a superior class would marry a girl either from the same class or from any of the classes below his, for the simple reason that he would never be offered a girl by a family which belonged to a class superior than his own. Among the Bhunjais, dhai sharı (also called Lahoreah) held the highest position in the social hierarchy. A dhai sharı boy would normally choose his bride from within this class rather than from any other inferior class. He would by and large get a girl belonging to a sub-caste in the sharı sharı group. In the case of girls it was the other way round. They were married to boys belonging to the same rank of Khatri to which they belonged or to boys who came from a higher class. The result was quite interesting. Generally sharı sharı boys received daughters of the harshı sharı Khatri but did not give any girl in return and the harshı sharı who occupied the same relative position with the mass of unclassed Bhunjais, would receive girls in their rank from the latter class but would not marry their own daughters among the unclassed Bhunjais.

205. Ibid., Para-11.
206. Ibid., Para-54.
This keenness of every Khatri to marry his daughter in the higher grade gave rise to the custom of hypergamy. In due course this custom became extremely severe in its application and produced serious social consequences. According to H.B. Edwardes' report on the female infanticide in the Jullundur District for the year 1852, one great ambition of every Bhunjai father was that his daughter be married into the dhal share family, a very difficult thing to achieve. He would overcome the difficulty by acceding to the demand of a large dowry at the time of marriage and continue to meet subsequent additional demands made by his son-in-law, possibly because they were accompanied by threats of breaking the marriage. Thus, mounting marriage expenses became one more reason for killing the girls in their infancy and during the Sikh period of Panjab history, girls were killed almost without exception. In fact it became a regular custom.

There were a few honourable exceptions during the Sikh regime to this custom of murdering the female infants but they had to suffer for not observing the custom as would be clear from the case of a Bedi named Panjab Singh of Mukandpur near Banga. Being an enlightened man he preserved his daughter and justified doing so on the plea that the Qur'an did not permit this custom. For his daring to preserve his daughter, he was...
ex-communicated by Baba Bikram Singh Bedi, the head of the community then, and all, except members of his own family, treated him almost as a sweeper, throwing to him, from distance, money or anything else when they would have the occasion to deal with him. When his eldest daughter was eight years old, she was married to the son of a Suggee Khatri of Nawanshahr. It is interesting to note that no household work was exacted from that girl on account of her sacred lineage. In a very practical and credible way, it sheds light on the fact that the Khatri themselves shirked from marrying the daughters of their Gurus. No doubt, Khatri refrained from marrying the daughters of the priestly class but at the same time it lent superior status to the Bedis, who considered it below their dignity to give their daughters in marriage to their followers but took pride in getting daughters from the Khatri instead. The reasons for the preservation of one or two daughters among the social class of Hindus was to give the 'kanyadan.' To accept 'kanyadan,' by the law of the shastras, was a great sin, but to give it was one of the most meritorious virtues. Consequently to rear a daughter and to give her in marriage was necessary for every Hindu who had ever married himself.

211. Ibid., Para-15.
212. "kanyavan" or the virgins gift is the water which the bride's father takes in the palm of his hand after the Brahmam (Priest) has read mantras (Hymns) over it, pours it into the hand of the Bridegroom. The sin of receiving it was therefore on the head of the Bridegroom, until he had himself reared a daughter and given in gift to others at her bridal. According to Brahanical mythology 'kanyavan' is a pun or religious gift.
213. Ibid., Para-44.
'Kenvadan' or virgin's gift was very essential for every Hindu and naturally the virgin's marriage involved huge expenditure and it led to a general practice of demanding and dictating dowries among Khatris.

The difficulty of marrying daughters suitably had operated in the past generations, probably for hundreds of years, to foster the barbarous crime of female infanticide. Besides the marriage expenses, the parents of the lower ranks among the Khatris had to face a lot of trouble in searching out suitable matches for their daughters. The daughters, if not married at the proper age were considered impious. In face of anticipated non-availability of suitable matches for them, the only way out with the parents was to commit female infanticide.